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DISCOURSES

ON

SEVERAL IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

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DISCOURSES

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ON

SEVERAL IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

BY THE LATE

Right Rev. SAMUEL SEABURY, D. D.

Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the States of Connecticut and Rhode-Island.

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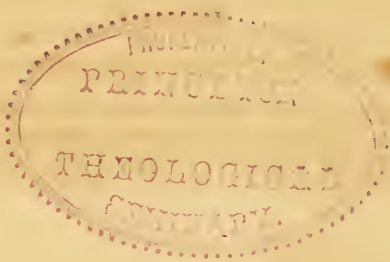

DISCOURSE I.

PART THE FIRST.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF PHARAOH.

EXOD. iv. 21. *And the Lord said unto Moſes, when thou goeſt to return into Egypt, ſee thou do all thoſe wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he ſhall not let the people go.*

THE hiſtory of Pharaoh, which makes ſo conſpicuous a figure in the Bible, being annually read in the church; there being ſome things in it hard to be underſtood; and the predeſtinarians interpreting the circumſtance of God's hardening his heart, to prove that he was under an eternal and irreſiſtible decree of reprobation from God; ſo that he could not do otherwiſe than he did do—fill up the meaſure of his iniquity, by obſtinately reſiſting the will of God—periſh miſerably in this world, and, under the wrath of God, ſink into endleſs perdition in the world to come: I have thought it beſt, ac-

cording to my ability, to make such observations on the history of Pharoah, as shall set his conduct in its true and natural light.

If I can hereby vindicate the ways of God, and shew him to be, what both reason and revelation teach us to believe, infinite in justice and truth, in goodness and mercy, I shall think myself happy.

That Pharaoh was not a mere machine, acting under a fatal necessity, but a free agent as other men are, and could have acted otherwise than he did act, will, I trust, appear from his history; and will make his example a proper admonition and caution to us with regard to our own conduct.

Before I proceed in the subject before me, I have to remark, that at the time when Pharaoh lived, idolatry, or the worship of false gods, had made considerable progress in the world. It seems to be the opinion of the learned, that idolatry first began in Chaldea, before the exodus of Abraham from thence; and that the sun, and moon, and stars, called in the scripture the host of heaven, were the first objects of it. Very probably arguments are urged to show, that the tower of Babel, where God confounded the language of mankind, was built with a view to the worship of the sun. His bright and glorious appearance when shining in full splendour; the daily course he unremittingly observed; the perpetual efflux of light and heat which proceeded from him as from an inexhaustible fountain, which were so necessary to the fecundity of the earth and salubrity of the air, all concurred to impress speculative men with the notion that he was

the God of this world, to whom they owed all the good things they enjoyed from it: and

When, in conjunction with the sun, they observed the moon and stars to mark more precisely the divisions of time and the return of seasons, they would be easily led to consider them as co-efficient, or, at least, subordinate divinities, acting under him in the benevolent business of blessing the earth and its inhabitants.

When men begin to speculate and philosophise in matters of religion, it is impossible to say how far they shall proceed, or where stop. The warmth of the sun was necessary to vegetation: to make it abundant, tillage was necessary also. The strength, and patience, and docility of the ox, or bullock, pointed him out as the animal most fit for this business; and his usefulness was found so great, that part, at least, of that adoration which was due only to the Creator and Governor of the universe, was transferred to the brute animal who turned the earth with the plough to lighten the labour and fatigue of man.

But wherever idolatry began, what was its origin, what its progress; previous to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, it had deeply infected that country. Not only the host of heaven, but the river Nile, to whose annual overflowing the amazing fruitfulness of their country was owing, the sacred bullock, under the name of Apis, were esteemed and worshipped as supreme deities.

The Israelites had long sojourned in Egypt, first as friends, then as slaves. It appears to have been

the intention of God, by means of this people, to retain the world in the knowledge and worſhip of himſelf. the true God, the Creator and Governor of all things that exiſt, in oppoſition to the growing infatuation of idolatry and polytheiſm which was then overſpreading the world; more eſpecially to preſerve, as far as poſſible, from all the pollutions of idolatry and falſe worſhip, that people from whom Meſſiah, the Redeemer and Saviour of men, was, according to the fleſh, to come into the world.

Previouſly, therefore, to his giving them a religion immediately from heaven, for the rule of their conduct, the fundamental laws of which were afterward delivered to them from the midſt of thunder and lightning on Mount Sinai—it was neceſſary to convince the Iſraelites that the God of their fathers, of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob, who then interpoſed between them and Pharaoh for their deliverance from bondage, was really and truly the ſupreme and only God, the Creator of the world and of man and all things in it, the only object of adoration: that, therefore, it was their duty to worſhip him only—to do all that he commanded—to forbear every thing which he forbad.

As Creator of the world, he was ſuperior to all the powers of nature; as Governor of the world, he could reward or puniſh; and as a juſt and equal Governor, he would puniſh the tranſgreſſors of his laws, and reward thoſe who were obedient to them. To make impreſſion deeply on their minds, and to convince them that Moſes was the ſervant and

vicegerent of God to them, no method could have been more effectual than the conteſt between God and Pharaoh, which was carried on before their eyes, and which ended in their deliverance from the ſlavery of Egypt.

This leſſon was neceſſary for them. Their long intercourſe with the Egyptians had, in ſome degree at leaſt, corrupted their religious principles, and gave them a fondneſs for the Egyptian gods and rites of worſhip. Soon after the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai, they ſhewed their propenſity to the idolatry of the country where they had ſo long inhabited. Upon the delay of Moſes to return from the mount, they ſuppoſed he had periſhed in the fire which burned on it. Being without a leader, and deſtitute of one to communicate the divine will to them, they had immediate recourſe to the idolatrous ſuperſtition of Egypt; made an image of the god Apis—a calf or young bullock —proclaimed to the congregation, "Theſe be thy gods, O Iſrael, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Before this calf Aaron built an altar, and ordered a feaſt to be held to the Lord the next day, when ſacrifices were offered, and religious adoration paid to it.

It cannot be ſuppoſed that the Iſraelites were ſo ſtupid as to think the calf which they then made was really the God who had delivered them from Egypt. It is more probable that they ſuppoſed the calf to be an emblem or repreſentation of God, through which they were to worſhip him, and receive communications of his will. This notion

was agreeable to the philoſophy of that time, and thought to be the dictate of reaſon and nature. Strong, indeed, muſt have been their propenſity to it, when neither the wonders wrought by Moſes in Egypt, which demonſtrated the power of God to be ſuperior to all nature, nor the bright effulgence of his glory on Mount Sinai, which appeared like flaming fire, and proved God to be inviſible, could wean them from it, or make them regard the ſecond precept of their decalogue, which prohibited the worſhipping God by images, or endeavouring to repreſent him by any ſenſible things.

Several circumſtances in the hiſtory of Pharaoh give us reaſon to ſuppoſe that he was of a proud, obſtinate, and cruel temper. He knew no power ſuperior to his own, and he had been uſed to make his own will the rule of his conduct. The more obſtinate and ſelf-willed he was, the more proper ſubject was he for God to act on. He, therefore, diſplayed his power on Pharaoh, becauſe he would reſiſt it to the utmoſt, and give him a fair opportunity of proving to him, to the Egyptians, to the Iſraelites, to the whole world, that God, who demanded the diſmiſſion of the Iſraelites, was, indeed, the God of the univerſe, who created and who governs the world and all things in it; and, therefore, the only proper object of worſhip and adoration.

Before Joſeph was carried into Egypt, a body of people, under the denomination of the *Shepherds*, had had overrun the middle and lower part of that country, and held it more than three hundred years. They were, probably, the Harites, whom the child-

ren of Eſau had driven from Mount Hor. By one of their kings, Joſeph had been advanced, and his father and family invited into Egypt and kindly treated. Cheriſhed by the indulgence of the court, and the country of the Egyptians, they greatly increaſed.

Joſeph continued prime miniſter and chief governor of Egypt for eighty years. During all that time, his prudent management kept the kingdom in peace. After his death, the old Egyptians, who had kept poſſeſſion of the Upper Egypt, made war upon the ſhepherds, and, being joined by the Lower Egypt, which revolted from them, drove them out, and took complete poſſeſſion of the country. Moſt probably the Iſraelites aſſiſted their friends the ſhepherds in this war, ſo unfortunate for them. This may have been the reaſon why the king and victorious Egyptians made ſlaves of the Iſraelites, and ſo cruelly oppreſſed them.

However that be, the new king, it is ſaid, "knew not Joſeph." He was of a people entirely diſtinct from, and victorious over the king and people who had been ſo kind and hoſpitable to the Iſraelites. He knew not, at leaſt he regarded not the preſervation of Egypt, which had been effected by the prudent conduct of Joſeph under the ſhepherd kings. He ſeems to have feared that the ſhepherds who had been driven out might meditate a return, and, if they ſhould be joined by the Iſraelites, might be too powerful for him: he, therefore, propoſed to his council to "work wiſely with them, leſt they multiply, and it come to paſs if there be war,

they join themſelves unto our enemies, and fight againſt us, and get them out of the land."

To part with ſo large a number of ſlaves was grating to his avaricious temper: beſides, his kingdom was to be fortified and rendered defenſible againſt his enemies. His firſt project was to break down their ſtrength and ſpirit by hard labour. Taſk-maſters were ſet over them; and they were compelled to work in brick and mortar, and in the field; and Pithan and Raamſes were built, or rather fortified by their labour.*

This rigorous ſervitude ſeems to have begun about thirty or forty years after Joſeph's death; but it was ſo far from diminiſhing the number of the Iſraelites, that, by the particular favour of God, they increaſed more under it than they had done before. Other councils were therefore to be purſued; and that which appeared to this cruel king as the moſt likely to anſwer his purpoſe, was to have all the male children of Iſrael deſtroyed as ſoon as they were born. The midwives were firſt deſired to carry this cruel order into execution; but their humanity and conſcience revolted againſt it. An edict was then publiſhed, requiring that all the male infants of the Iſraelites ſhould be drowned in the Nile; and meaſures were taken to execute it with rigour. To what degree the Iſraelites ſuffered by it is not particularly mentioned: but while it was in force, Moſes was born of the

* See on this ſubject Chronological Antiquities by Mr. John Jackſon, vol. ii. See alſo the works of Dr. Thomas Jackſon, vol. iii. p. 191, &c.

tribe of Levi; and by the precautions taken by his parents, they seem to have been in great dread of the fatal effects of the king's order. Being exposed among the flags at the edge of the river, in a basket made of rushes, and secured from the water by pitch, he was found by the daughter of Pharaoh, who went thither to bathe. Josephus informs us, that she was married to an Egyptian prince, but had no children. This circumstance may have excited her humanity, when she saw the helpless and wretched state of the exposed infant. She relieved him from his danger, gave him his own mother for his nurse, adopted him for her son, and educated him in all the learning and policy of Egypt.

This king of Egypt, who knew not Joseph, is by Josephus called *Amasis*. He is not distinguished in the Bible by any particular name: the appellation of *Pharaoh* being common to all the kings of Egypt, till long after that period.

As we read no more of the destruction of the Israelitish infants, it is probable the influence of the daughter of Pharaoh obtained the repeal, or the mitigation of the horrid edict against them. Their servitude, however, continued, and their labour was rigorously executed; insomuch that their heart became exceeding sad, and their lives were made bitter by reason of the labour that was required of them.

Moses, notwithstanding his adoption into the family of Pharaoh in his infancy, and his education in his court, knew his descent. Probably he had been informed by his parents, whom he might con-

tinue to viſit after he was removed from their care, that the Iſraelites were his brethren, and he himſelf deſcended of the family of Levi. That he ſhould viſit them frequently will not, therefore, appear ſtrange, nor be unaccountable: nor have we reaſon to ſuppoſe that his viſits were idle ones. Seeing their affliction, he would naturally employ in their favour the intereſt he had at court, eſpecially with the daughter of the king. In one of theſe viſits, when he was about forty years old, ſeeing an Egyptian beating an Iſraelite, he killed and buried him. He hoped that by this action his countrymen would be led to conſider him as their avenger and deliverer; but in that light they regarded him not. Pharaoh, being informed of the conduct of Moſes, was determined to put him to death—ſo much had he interfered with his views and policy. But Moſes fled from him into the land of Midian, and was there forty years with Jethro the prieſt and prince of his country, the deſcendant of Abraham by Ketura, and a worſhipper of the true God. Attending the flocks of Jethro, whoſe daughter Zipporah he had married, he drove them to the further ſide of Mount Horeb, for the ſake of paſturage. There God appeared, or manifeſted himſelf to him, in a flame of fire in a buſh, ſhrub of thorns; which, though it appeared to be totally on fire, was not at all conſumed.

Before this event, the king of Egypt, from whom Moſes had fled, died. But his ſucceſſor purſuing the ſame oppreſſive conduct to the Iſraelites, they, in their diſtreſs, cried unto God. Remembering

his promiſe to their anceſtors, the time of the accompliſhment of which approached, he determined to deliver them from their ſervitude; and to deliver them in ſuch a way as ſhould make it evident both to the Iſraelites and to the Egyptians, that the God of Iſrael was the God of the univerſe, ſuperior to every power in nature; and, therefore, the only rightful object of adoration, the only ſure foundation of faith and confidence.

With this intention God appointed Moſes his ambaſſador, and ſent him unto Pharaoh to demand the diſmiſſion of his people, the Iſraelites, from the ſervitude in which he kept them. At the ſame time, he informed Moſes, that the king of Egypt would not willingly let them depart; but that a mighty hand, and a ſtrong arm, and many judgments executed in the midſt of Egypt, would be neceſſary to procure their deliverance: he, therefore, directed Moſes to perform ſome particular miracles before the elders of Iſrael, and before Pharaoh, to convince them that God Almighty, the God of the univerſe, he to whom all the elements of the world, all the powers of nature were ſubject, had really ſent him on this buſineſs. "And," ſaid God to Moſes, "when thou goeſt to return into Egypt, ſee thou do all thoſe wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand; but I will harden his heart, that he ſhall not let the people go."

It is plain from the text, that God had not yet hardened the heart of Pharaoh. The higheſt, the fulleſt, the ſtrongeſt ſenſe that can be put on the text can only amount to a threat, that God would,

ſome time after, harden his heart. But as the threats of God are always conditional, and ſuſpended on the good or evil conduct of the ſubject of them, the execution of this threat to harden Pharoah's heart muſt have depended on his after conduct. Its utmoſt meaning can only be, that Pharaoh would not willingly let them go, but only as compelled by ſevere judgments: for God had previouſly ſaid, (chap. iii. 20.) "I will ſtretch out my hand, and ſmite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midſt thereof: And after that he (Pharaoh) will let you go."

Accordingly we find that Pharaoh long reſiſted the will of God, and endured the plagues which were inflicted on him—often relented, and as often hardened his heart. But upon the deſtruction of the firſt-born, his heart was ſo broken down by the judgments of God, that he not only permitted the Iſraelites to depart, but was urgent to get them out of his kingdom. The Egyptians alſo joined in haſtening them away, and readily gave or lent unto them ſuch things as they required, jewels of ſilver, and gold, and raiment.*

Moſes undertook this buſineſs with great reluctance. He knew the difficulty of the undertaking,

* The loan of theſe things to the Iſraelites does not appear to have been a temporary one to be returned again after a time, nor to have been ſo underſtood by the Egyptians; but a compenſation to the Iſraelites for their labour, and to induce them readily and quietly to leave their country. They had long ſerved the Egyptians in hard labour; and it was but reaſonable that ſome compenſation ſhould be made to them; eſpecially as they were hurried out of the land, and had no opportunity of preparing for their journey.

both on account of the haughty, cruel, and covetous temper of the king and people of Egypt, and of the servile, discontented, and querulous temper and habits of the Israelites. Upon his complaining of a hesitation in his speech, God, for his encouragement, joined his brother Aaron with him as his second in the embassy; because Aaron was a good and eloquent speaker. He then commanded him to perform certain signs and wonders before the elders of Israel, and before Pharaoh, that they might believe and know that he was sent of God.

When he set out to return into Egypt, by the direction of God, Aaron met him near Horeb: to him Moses communicated all that God had said; and they went into Egypt together. Having assembled the elders and heads of the tribes of Israel, he declared to them the business on which he had come, viz. to make known to them the purpose of God, to deliver them by his hand from the bondage under which they groaned. And to convince them of the truth of what he said, he performed before them the signs which God had commanded.

Suffering as the people were under the burden of slavery, the message of Moses was a cordial to their hearts: eagerly did they receive it; and, greatly rejoicing that God had remembered their affliction, and visited them under it, they bowed themselves in grateful adoration, and with joyful hearts worshipped Jehovah.

Having, in the progress of this business, attended Moses and Aaron into Egypt, let us stop for a few minutes, and see whether some reflections, useful

to us in the chriſtian life, cannot be drawn from that part of the ſubject which has been before us.

It appears, from the preceding enumeration of particulars, that the promiſes of God are a ſure ground for our faith to reſt on, under all circumſtances, however adverſe and diſtreſſing. He had told Abram that his ſeed ſhould be ſtrangers and ſervants, and in an afflicted ſtate, for four hundred years. That he would then judge the nation whom they ſhould ſerve: that they ſhould come out from this ſervitude with great ſubſtance, and poſſeſs the country of the Amorites, (Gen. xv. 13, &c.)

To this promiſe God adverted, when he told Moſes that he was the God of Abraham, and of Iſaac, and of Jacob: that he was come down to fulfil his promiſe to them, by bringing the Iſraelites out of Egypt, and giving them the country he had promiſed their fathers to give them. This promiſe he did exactly fulfil; he did judge and puniſh the Egyptians for their injuſtice and cruelty; he did bring out the Iſraelites from under their ſlavery; and did ſettle them fully in the country of Canaan, and under the conduct of Moſes and Joſhua.

To us, too, God hath made moſt gracious and precious promiſes: that though we are ſtrangers and ſojourners in this world, and have no abiding city; but are expoſed to the troubles and afflictions of this mortal life, to the temptations of ſatan, and to the ſervitude of ſin, he will, in his own good time, deliver his penitent, faithful ſervants from them all, and bring them into the heavenly Canaan, his own eternal kingdom—the reſt reſerved

for the people of God, through the mediation of his Son, our Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt, and under the conduct of the Holy Ghoſt, his own moſt bleſſed Spirit. Let us, then, be careful to love the Lord our God, who hath done ſuch great things for us, and promiſed ſuch mighty bleſſings to us—his Son for our redemption, his Holy Spirit for our ſanctification, the kingdom of heaven for our eternal inheritance; and not be like the Jews, a hard-hearted and a ſtiff-necked people, who ſet not their heart aright, nor kept the commandments of God, but rebelled againſt his word, diſbelieved his promiſes, and reſiſted his will; leſt the oath of rejection be pronounced againſt us, as it was againſt the Iſraelites who came out of Egypt—"ye ſhall not enter into my reſt."

The backwardneſs of Moſes to become the ambaſſador of God to Pharaoh is, indeed, an extraordinary circumſtance. He well knew the power of God, and the promiſe he had made to Abraham. He knew the bitter ſervitude which his brethren endured, and anxiouſly wiſhed their deliverance from it. His diſcouragements probably were, his want of confidence in his own capacity; his opinion of the proud and cruel temper of the Egyptians, and their hatred to the Iſraelites; his diſtruſt of the ſteadineſs and fortitude of his countrymen; and his apprehenſion that the buſineſs muſt be accompliſhed by war, for which he knew them to be unprepared and unfit.

We know it is equally eaſy with God to deliver his ſervants by any means he ſhall chuſe, how-

ever weak and insignificant they may appear to human apprehension. This, no doubt, was the sense which Moses entertained of the power of God, as well as it is ours; and yet such is the infirmity of nature, that he could not easily bring himself to act on an opinion which he knew was founded in truth. When, however, he had consented to become the ambassador of God to Pharaoh on this occasion, we find no more diffidence in him; no hesitation to do whatever God commanded; so that he hath obtained the attestation of St. Paul, that he was faithful to him that appointed him.

In prosecution of this commission, Moses was soon convinced, by his own observation, of the truth of what he had before firmly believed—that God could make the most contemptible of his creatures—frogs, locusts, flies, lice—the instruments of his justice, to punish the cruelty and humble the pride of insolent Pharaoh. How vain is human power, when it exalts itself against God! Dreadful are his judgments when called down by cruelty and oppression!

The Israelites had been invited to settle in Egypt by former kings: probably they had taken part with their friends, the shepherds, when they were attacked by the old Egyptians: falling under their power in the issue of the war, they were reduced to the most bitter distress. In addition to the hard labour which was rigorously exacted of them, their children were taken from them and thrown into the river. God sees and regards the cruelty with which his servants are treated: he sleepeth not, but will,

in his own time, call the offenders to juſtice for their crimes. Dreadful was his judgment in this caſe—All the firſt born of the children of the Egyptians were, in one night, cut off by the angel of death.

Let us revere the judgments of God, and be careful to cultivate the virtues of humanity and mercy, which are ſo very dear to him. Remember, therefore, that every man, even the ſlave who depends on our will, is our brother—the creature of the ſame God—the partaker of the ſame nature with ourſelves; and juſtice and chriſtianity require that he be treated accordingly. So will God bleſs us and keep us from evil, and give us the reward of our humanity and mercy in his heavenly kingdom.

DISCOURSE I.

PART THE SECOND.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF PHARAOH.

IT hath been obſerved, that when God determined to deliver the Iſraelites from the ſlavery of Egypt, he appointed Moſes his ambaſſador to the king of the country, to treat with him about the diſmiſſion of that people from their ſervitude whom God claimed as his own. The credentials of Moſes were the ſigns and wonders which God had commanded him to perform before Pharaoh, that he might know that God had ſent him, and that he made his demand by the authority of God.

On no other ground can this tranſaction be clearly underſtood, or fairly explained. The people of Iſrael were the peculiar people of God. He had appropriated them to himſelf with the conſent of their forefathers, Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob. They were to be his people, and he was to be their

God. This people Pharaoh held in bondage, and God ſent to demand them from him. The ſtile in which Moſes made his demand was that of an ambaſſador—not in his own name as principal, nor in the name of the people as their repreſentative, but in the name of God moſt high: "Thus ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael, Let my people go, that they may hold a feaſt unto me in the wilderneſs," was his addreſs to Pharaoh. The anſwer of Pharaoh was impious, as well as haughty: "Who is the Lord," of whom you tell me, "that I ſhould obey his voice to let Iſrael go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Iſrael go."

The buſineſs was now brought to a point. God had demanded, and Pharaoh had refuſed to diſmiſs the Iſraelites whom both claimed. It now remained to be determined whoſe ſervants they ſhould be, whether God's, who claimed them by the prior right of a covenant with the head and founder of their nation; or Pharaoh's, who claimed them as his ſlaves by the conqueſt his predeceſſors had made of the country where they reſided.

In this conteſt, Pharaoh took the firſt ſtep by increaſing the labour of the Iſraelites: for no ſooner had Moſes made his demand, than the imagination ſeized him, that the Iſraelites had too much leiſure; that they had been caballing together, and had employed Moſes and Aaron to ſolicit leave for them to quit the country, under the pretence of ſacrificing unto their God. That they might have full employ for the time which he ſuppoſed they had ſpent in idleneſs and private intrigues, he directed

that the ſtraw which was neceſſary for the making of bricks ſhould be no longer ſupplied to them.*

Wanting ſtraw, the Iſraelites were obliged to ramble over the fields to collect ſtubble: of courſe they could not daily deliver in the uſual number of bricks which they uſed to do, and which was ſtill required of them. On this account their officers, who, under the Egyptian taſk-maſters, had been appointed to ſuperintend their labour, were beaten.

In their diſtreſs theſe officers applied to Pharaoh, but could obtain no mitigation of their labour, or allowance of ſtraw: "Ye are idle, ye are idle," ſaid Pharaoh; "therefore ye ſay, let us go, and do ſacrifice to the Lord. Go, therefore, now and work; for there ſhall no ſtraw be given you, yet ſhall ye deliver the tale of bricks."

Dejected and diſpirited by the heart-breaking repulſe, they met Moſes and Aaron, who ſeem to have been waiting for their return from Pharaoh. In bitterneſs of ſoul they appealed unto God againſt them, that inſtead of delivering them from ſervitude, they had occaſioned the increaſe of their labour and ſufferings, had raiſed Pharaoh's indignation againſt them, and armed him with a fair pretence for deſtroying them.

* The operation of brick-making in Egypt and in the eaſtern countries is very different from what it is in Europe. Their bricks are only mortar made of clay, with which ſtraw is mixed to make it hold together. They mould them of different ſizes, according to the uſe for which they intend them, and dry them in the ſun. Of theſe bricks, laid in mortar, they build their houſes, covering the bricks with plaiſter within and without. On this ſubject Biſhop Lowth quotes Sir John Chardin and Maundrell. See note on Iſaiah ix. 9.

Moſes ſeems to have been deeply affected by their remonſtrance. Inſtead of replying to them, "he returned unto the Lord,"* and broke out in an expoſtulation which does not ſeem conſiſtent with his meek and faithful character; "Lord, wherefore haſt thou ſo evil intreated this people? why is it that thou haſt ſent me? For ſince I came to Pharaoh to ſpeak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither haſt thou delivered thy people at all."

To theſe complaints of Moſes, God returns a preciſe anſwer, after cautioning him againſt impatience and deſpondency in his preſent ſituation: "Now," that is, in the iſſue, "thou ſhalt ſee what I will do to Pharaoh." By his name Jehovah importing the inviſible eſſence and immutability of God, who gives certainty to his promiſes by fulfilling them, he declares that he remembered his covenant with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, to give the land of Canaan to their poſterity, and to judge the nation who ſhould oppreſs them, and that he would make it good. With a ſtrong hand he would oblige Pharaoh to let them go, and even to drive them out of his land.

This meſſage Moſes delivered unto the Iſraelites, as God had commanded. But ſuch was their dejection and anguiſh of heart, from their cruel bondage, that they would receive neither courage nor conſolation from any thing that he could ſay.

* From this and ſimilar expreſſions, the opinion of Biſhop Patrick, that there was ſome fixed place where the Shechinah appeared, and where Moſes could conſult God, is highly probable.

Nor does it appear that Moſes had recovered his ſpirits, or acquired any confidence in the buſineſs in which he was engaged: for when God directed him to go again unto Pharaoh, and repeat his demand for the diſmiſſion of the Iſraelites, he anſwered, "Behold the children of Iſrael have not hearkened unto me, how then ſhall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumciſed lips?" This is an Hebrew phraſe, and means that he could not ſpeak readily and without ſtammering. To the heſitation in his ſpeech he ſeems to have imputed his want of ſucceſs both with the Iſraelites and with Pharaoh. For his encouragement, God ſaid to him, "See, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh; and Aaron, thy brother, ſhall be thy prophet. Thou ſhalt ſpeak all that I command thee;" that is, to Aaron; "and Aaron, thy brother, ſhall ſpeak unto Pharaoh, that he ſend the children of Iſrael out of his land."

And that Moſes might no longer think that the impediment in his ſpeech had been any diſadvantage to the meſſage he had delivered, God informed him again, that Pharaoh's inattention was owing to another cauſe—"I will harden Pharaoh's heart," ſaid God, "and multiply my ſigns and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh ſhall not hearken unto you; that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, my people, the children of Iſrael, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians ſhall know that I am the Lord," &c.

In this tranſaction there are two things which

deserve our notice: The infirmity of human nature which appeared in Moses—the goodness and mercy which God manifested, both to him and to Pharaoh.

The infirmity in Moses showed itself in two instances. One was his mentioning a second time the hesitation in his speech, as a disqualification for executing the commission which God had given to him. What God had said to him formerly at Horeb ought to have satisfied him, and silenced his apprehensions forever. Neither the dejection nor pusillanimity of the Israelites, nor the haughty and arrogant behaviour of Pharaoh, would have damped his courage, or checked his prospect of a happy issue of the negociation in which he was engaged, had he fully believed God. He would have borne the inconvenience of a slow or stammering utterance without repining, knowing it to be the will of God, who was all-sufficient for every thing, and could accomplish his purposes by any means he should choose; knowing too, that the glory of God, not the honour of the agent, was the great object in view; and that his glory would appear conspicuous in proportion to the imbecility and unfitness of the agent by whom it was effected.

This last declaration of God to him was accompanied with a solemn charge; "Speak thou unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, all that I say unto thee;" which seems to have satisfied all the doubts, and silenced all the scruples of Moses. Without any distrust of the issue, he seems ever after to have followed the directions which God gave him.

The other inſtance of human infirmity in Moſes was the impatience he ſhowed at the forbearance of God toward Pharaoh: "Since I came to Pharaoh to ſpeak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither haſt thou delivered this people at all." He certainly expected, when Pharaoh ſo haughtily rejected the demand which he had made in the name of God to have the Iſraelites diſmiſſed, that the divine vengeance would inſtantly have burſt on his head. Seeing nothing of this happen, and the only effect of his application to be the greater oppreſſion of his nation, he ſeems to have ſuppoſed that God had given up the matter, and that there was no proſpect of the deliverance of Iſrael. Had he remembered what God had ſaid of the obſtinacy of Pharaoh's will, he never would have expreſſed himſelf in this manner.

Gracious is God, as well as righteous; merciful, as well as juſt. It is his property to overlook the infirmities of his ſervants, and long to delay the puniſhment of the wicked—therefore Moſes eſcaped correction. And though the final iſſue of Pharaoh's conduct was fully known to God, and he might then have juſtly cut him off for his impiety, his example would have been of leſs ſervice to the world, from its ignorance of the height of his impiety, and of the juſtice of God's viſitation upon him. That the long ſuffering of God might appear, it was neceſſary that Pharaoh ſhould fill up the meaſure of his iniquity, before the vengeance of heaven fell on him. Neither would the goodneſs of God have ſo eminently appeared, had Pha-

raoh been taken off by divine vengeance in the beginning of his wicked life, before his hard heart, and obstinate temper, and perverse opposition to the command of God, had fully showed themselves, and convinced all who beheld him how much he deserved the chastisement of heaven.

This very argument God afterward useth with Pharaoh: "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." The marginal reading in our Bible is, *made thee stand*. For this cause have I hitherto preserved thee from destruction—not that thou didst not deserve to be destroyed, but because I knew thy obstinacy and self-will, and saw thee to be a fit object on which to show my power and supremacy over all things; that all the world might know that I am the supreme God, almighty in power, infinite in mercy, long suffering to sinners, and unwilling to punish, desirous of their repentance, that I may pardon their transgressions.

From the dejection of the Israelites upon their repulse from Pharaoh, we may learn the low and abject condition to which their slavery had reduced them. Their servile state had continued near one hundred and thirty years, and its rigour had so absolutely broken down their spirits, that they chose rather to submit tamely to it, rigid and severe as it was, than to use any exertion to free themselves from it. When Moses and Aaron first came to them with the good news that God had visited and would deliver them from their hard thraldom,

and had performed the signs which God commanded before them, they believed, and, gratefully bowing their heads, worshipped the Lord who had visited them. Yet, on the insolent repulse from Pharaoh, in the matter of the straw, they were beyond measure dejected and spiritless. Their prospects were all clouded over; their hopes were at an end, and they would hear no more of deliverance and freedom, though declared and promised to them by Moses in the name of God.

When they at last marched out of Egypt, which probably was within a month of this time, we are told, there were six hundred thousand of them who were men. From so large a number, an army sufficient to have shaken Egypt to its centre might easily have been raised, had there been any spirit left in them. But so totally were they humbled and dispirited by their bondage, that they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage. Better it appeared to them to serve the Egyptians, than to run any risks to be delivered from them.

Their whole deliverance must, therefore, be from God. In themselves there was no energy; nor could they make any efforts that promised success. Probably, God suffered their thraldom to continue long, and to be very grievous, that their spirits being broken, and their hopes ended—their prospects annihilated, and their ability brought to nothing, their deliverance might more eminently appear to be the work of God only—the salvation of Jehovah: and that all who beheld them march-

ing out of Egypt, in freedom and triumph, might say, "This is the finger of God"—this is the work of God most high, the Lord of nature, the supreme Governor of the universe—of every thing that exists; who doth, in heaven and in earth, whatsoever he pleaseth; none is able to resist his hand, or say unto him, "What doest thou?"

From the circumstances of this history which have been before us, it appears evidently, that God had not yet hardened Pharaoh's heart, though he had twice threatened to do so—once in the text, and once in chap. vii. 3.

It hath been observed, that the threats of God are always conditional, and to be understood as founded on the ill conduct of the person threatened. If he repent, or forbear to do the wickedness for which he is threatened, the threat loses its force. When God said, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart," the meaning is, if he resist the evidence I shall give him; if he withstand the miracles which shall be wrought for his conviction; if he refuse to obey my requisition to let Israel depart from their servitude. The condition of the threat in chap. iv. 22, &c. is expressed, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, my first born. Let my son go, that he may serve me. If thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, thy first born."

Pharaoh having refused to let the people go, Moses and Aaron, by the direction of God, went to him; and, to convince him that they were really sent by Almighty God who was superior to,

and commanded all the powers of nature, to demand the diſmiſſion of the Iſraelites, " Aaron caſt down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his ſervants, and it became a ſerpent." Hereupon Pharaoh ſent for his wiſe men, the ſorcerers and magicians of Egypt, and they performed the ſame miracle; " For they caſt down every man his rod, and they became ſerpents." It is added, " But Aaron's rod ſwallowed up their rods. And he hardened Pharaoh's heart—he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had ſaid."

Two queſtions here preſent themſelves to us, which it will be right to determine if we can.

1. What is the meaning of the expreſſion, *And he hardened Pharaoh's heart?* To whom does the pronoun *he* relate? to God, to Moſes, or to the magicians? Pharaoh ſeems to have ſuppoſed, that the turning of Aaron's rod into a ſerpent was the effect of human art, or knowledge of the powers of nature. And he was determined to try whether the magicians of Egypt could not perform the ſame miracle.

Or, if he ſuppoſed this miracle to be performed by the power of the God of Iſrael, he might be willing to try, whether the gods of Egypt could not perform the ſame miracle by their ſervants the magicians, which the God of Iſrael had performed by Moſes and Aaron.

On either ſuppoſition, if the magicians ſucceeded, why ſhould Pharaoh ſuppoſe that Moſes and Aaron acted by a power ſuperior to them? If the miracle was wrought by divine power, the Gods of

Eygpt would appear to him capable of protecting him againſt the God of Iſrael, ſeeing they wrought the ſame miracle. Or if the turning of the rod into a ſerpent was the effect of art, and the knowledge of the powers of nature, it would appear to him that the magicians of Egypt were poſſeſſed of equal art, and knowledge of the powers of nature, with Moſes and Aaron; and, therefore, were able to defend him againſt all they could do.

When, therefore, the rods of the magicians were turned into ſerpents, Pharaoh's heart was hardened; not ſurely by any act of God, but by the iſſue of the attempt of the magicians. The meaning, therefore, of the expreſſion, *And he hardened Pharaoh's heart*, is, and Pharaoh's heart was hardened when he ſaw the magicians perform the ſame miracle which Moſes and Aaron had done.

In 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. it is ſaid, "The anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Iſrael, and he moved David againſt them, to ſay, go number Iſrael and Judah." The conſtruction refers the *moving* of David to God himſelf; yet, in the parallel paſſage, in Chron. xxi. 1. it is ſaid, "Satan ſtood up againſt Iſrael, and provoked David to number Iſrael." In truth, the pride and vanity of David's heart excited him to this wickedneſs: Of theſe ſatan availed himſelf, and his temptation was effectual: *David was moved to number Iſreal.*

The pride and covetouſneſs of Pharaoh's heart had the ſame effect on him, and equally expoſed him to the temptations of ſatan. Too proud to ſubmit to control, and too covetous to part with

a numerous people, whom he considered as his slaves, he determined to run any risk rather than dismiss them. He, therefore, hardened his heart against the miracle that had been wrought for his conviction.

His conduct, however, was more hasty than became a prudent man. A very remarkable circumstance had happened in the contest between Moses and the magicians, which he seems entirely to have overlooked. No sooner were the rods of the magicians turned into serpents, than Aaron's rod swallowed them up. Strange would it have been, that this demonstrative proof of the superiority of the God of Israel over the gods of Egypt, and of the power by which Moses and Aaron acted above the power of the magicians, was not observed by Pharaoh and his servants, did not the whole history show, evidently, that their own will was what they strove to gratify at all hazard. Had that ominous circumstance been regarded as it ought to have been, they would have perceived that no dependence could be made on the power or art of the magicians, nor on any miracles they might perform, since the miracle they had wrought was immediately counteracted and destroyed by the supreme power of that God whose servants Moses and Aaron were. And we find, that however their rods were turned into serpents, water into blood, and frogs brought upon the land by them, they were never able to counteract one miracle of Moses, nor guard against its effect. Though they turned water into blood, they could not restore the Nile to its natu-

ral ſtate when it was converted into blood by the rod of Moſes. They brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt; but they could not free their country from the ſwarms of thoſe animals which the judgment of God ſent on it. If they attempted theſe things, the iſſue was unfortunate; for the putrefaction of the river continued ſeven days, and was at laſt withdrawn by God, when it produced no good effect on obdurate Pharaoh. Nor was their help of any more avail in the judgment of the frogs. They removed them not—they continued to the great annoyance of Pharaoh and his people, till Moſes and Aaron were requeſted to remove them. They could promiſe with confidence, becauſe they knew that God could with certainty perform. *Glory over me*, ſaid Moſes—command me; appoint the time when the frogs ſhall depart from thee. Pharaoh appointed the next day; and at the prayer of Moſes the frogs died.

2. The other queſtion which ought to be reſolved is, when the rods of the magicians were turned into ſerpents, was it a real and true miracle, or the effect of ſorcery and magic?

Some have ſuppoſed, that this was all mere juggling, or deception of the ſight, a making that to appear which was not. But why then ſhould not the converſion of Aaron's rod into a ſerpent be mere juggling alſo? No difference is noted between the converſion of Aaron's rod into a ſerpent and thoſe of the magicians.

Others have ſuppoſed that the magicians artfully conveyed real ſerpents before the company, and as

artfully conveyed their rods out of sight. This differs not much from juggling, and may be equally supposed of Aaron as of the magicians. Besides, had the magicians acted by legerdemain and crafty tricks, they would have run great risk of detection by Moses and Aaron, who were not deficient in natural sagacity, and one of them well instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians, and then acting by commission from God, and under his immediate direction.

Some again have supposed that the rods of the magicians were converted into serpents by the power of the devil, to take off the attention of Pharaoh from the miracle which had been wrought on Aaron's rod. This supposition seems rather to shift, than to solve the difficulty. As a created being, the devil can have no greater powers than are given to him by God, nor use them further than God shall permit: and I know of no instance where he hath been permitted to work miracles in opposition to the miracles performed by the messengers of God, in obedience to his command.

To change a rod, or staff of wood, into a serpent by any means, particularly by only casting it on the ground, is not only above all natural causes and powers, but absolutely against them. No power but that which is superior to nature can be sufficient for this purpose. The power of him who is the author of nature; who made nature to be what it is; who made all things, and gave to every thing its peculiar properties; who sustains and directs every thing according to his pleasure, is alone able to change

the properties of things as he sees best, and to make a rod of wood to become a living serpent. The being whose power this is, is God—the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things. When, therefore, a staff cast from the hand on the ground, to gain credit to a message delivered in the name of God, becomes a serpent, the power of God is there shown, and shown for the express purpose of giving credit to his messenger, and establishing the authority of the commission by which he acts.

How, then, it may be asked, came the rods of the magicians to be turned into serpents? Was that too by the power of God? and to gain credit to Moses and Aaron as the messengers of God? I answer, I believe so. I know of no power able to turn a lifeless stick into an animated serpent, but the power of God. I cannot perceive the least intimation given in the history of the transaction, that the rods of the magicians were turned into serpents by a power different from that by which Aaron's rod was changed. Whether the miracle was properly conducted to authenticate the validity of the commission by which Moses and Aaron acted, and to influence Pharaoh to comply with their requisition, must be determined upon the due consideration of the whole transaction.

The king of Egypt was not the only person in fault with regard to the Israelites. The whole country seems to have been infected with the same proud, oppressive, and covetous temper with himself, and as unwilling to part with their labour and service as he was. Pharaoh and his court knew that

Moſes demanded the releaſe of the Iſraelites in the name of God, as his ſervants by a juſt right, and much prior to that by which he held them in bondage. To convince Pharaoh and his ſervants that the God of Iſrael was the God of the univerſe, ſupreme over all nature, and that they were really commiſſioned by him, and acted in his name, and by his authority, in demanding the releaſe of the Iſraelites, Aaron caſt the rod that was in his hand on the ground, expreſſly that it might become a ſerpent; and the event was, it did become a ſerpent. Had Pharaoh and his ſervants conducted themſelves as reaſonable men, they would have concluded that Moſes acted really and truly by authority from the God of Iſrael; and that the God of Iſrael was God moſt high, ſupreme over the world and all the powers of nature—that he commanded every thing, and would make it juſt what he pleaſed. To this God they ought to have ſubmitted, ſeeing he was God Almighty, the Creator and Governor of the univerſe; for no other could do as he did.

The teſt of their obedience was the diſmiſſion of the Iſraelites from their ſlavery; but this they declined. They thought their labour eſſential, at leaſt highly conducive to the proſperity of the kingdom. They ſuppoſed they held them by a juſt title, the conqueſt of the country. They and their predeceſſors had long enjoyed the benefit of their labour: Why then give them up at a word? ſome expedient muſt, however, be thought of, to take off the influence of the miracle which had

been wrought, and to justify Pharaoh in retaining the Israelites whose dismission had been so evidently demanded in the name of God most high. Whether Pharaoh thought that Moses wrought his miracle by an intimate knowledge of the powers of nature, and that persons of equal knowledge in the depths of science would be able to perform the same miracles which he did, or, at least, those that were equal to them; or whether he only proposed to excite an emulation between Moses and Aaron on the part of the God of Israel; and the wise men and sorcerers of Egypt, on the part of natural knowledge and magic, or on the behalf of the gods of Egypt; his calling in the sorcerers and magicians to enter into competition with Moses was absurd. Sufficient evidence, that Moses acted by a divine commission from God, the supreme governor of the world, had been laid before him, and he ought to have been convinced by it. To suppose that a rod could be turned into a serpent by knowledge in the powers of nature, or by the gods of Egypt, was ridiculous, and ought never to have entered the head of a reasonable man. Why then excite a competition between Moses and his wise men to determine a point which ought to have been considered as determined already? But Pharaoh set himself to keep the Israelites in his service, and therefore hardened his heart against the miracle that had been wrought for his conviction. It was, however, necessary that he should preserve the appearance of a consistent and candid conduct, that his people might be satisfied, and acquiesce in what he did.

No method was more likely to anſwer this purpoſe, than a trial of ſkill between Moſes and the wiſe men of Egypt, who could acquit themſelves beſt in miraculous feats. Perplexity and confuſion at leaſt would enſue, and few would know what to believe.

What we are to underſtand by *wiſe men*, and *ſorcerers* and *magicians*; whether they denoted three diſtinct orders of men, or were only different appellations of the ſame order; what their real characters and occupations were, and what their pretenſions, it is impoſſible for us to know. *Sorcerers* and *magicians* are words generally uſed to denote bad characters—people who employ conjurations and enchantments by compact with evil ſpirits. Or, if we diveſt the word of all ill meaning, and ſuppoſe them only to mean aſtronomers and natural philoſophers, who, through their knowledge of the powers and operations of nature, did do many things above the comprehenſion of the people, which were by them imagined to be produced by ſupernatural aſſiſtance; in either caſe, they muſt have known, that, with all their art and knowledge, and with the aſſiſtance of evil ſpirits into the bargain, they could not change a rod of wood into a living ſerpent. The attempt was baſe and diſhoneſt: and competitions with Almighty God—a pretending to do as great miracles as he did, was profane and wicked.

The beſt apology that can be made for them is, that they were under the command of an abſolute and proud king, and were probably more anxious

to conciliate his favour, than to approve themselves honest and upright men. Besides, they may have quieted any scruples or repugnancy in themselves, by the opinion that there could be no harm in carrying a rod and throwing it down before Pharaoh, whatever may have been his intention in their doing so. They did so at the king's command; and the same thing happened to their rods which had happened to Aaron's—they became serpents. God met them in the way in which they perversely chose to go. Pharaoh had obstinately barred his mind against all impressions from the miracle which God had caused to be wrought for his conviction. The magicians, to say no worse of them, seem to have acted without principle, and in a way which directly tends to confound all distinction between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. God saw best to permit their ill designs to succeed in the issue of the miracle which the magicians could have had no thought of performing.

It, however, answered Pharaoh's purpose. The magicians had wrought as great, nay, the same miracle that Moses had done. Why then should he believe that Moses acted by divine commission more than the magicians? The whole transaction, therefore, instead of mollifying Pharaoh's temper, and convincing him of the power of the God of Israel, hardened his heart; that is, it increased his obstinacy, and confirmed his resolution not to dismiss the Israelites from his service.

To a more reasonable man, there are two considerations which would probably have presented

themſelves on this occaſion. One is, that however the ſame miracle was wrought on their rods, which was wrought on the rod of Aaron, there was yet this difference; that, in the latter caſe, it was wrought expreſſly to prove the reality of a divine commiſſion, by authority of which, Moſes demanded the diſmiſſion of the Iſraelites. But the magicians pretended no divine commiſſion, but attempted the miracle without any object in view, except to baffle Moſes and Aaron, and take off the influence of the miracle they had wrought to gain credit to the commiſſion under which they acted, and to obtain Pharaoh's compliance with their demand, by convincing him, that the God by whoſe authority they acted, was ſuperior to all the powers of nature, and indeed almighty. That two of theſe magicians, *Jannes* and *Jambres*, withſtood Moſes, and reſiſted the truth, we learn from St. Paul (2 Tim. iii. 8.) and Biſhop Patrick informs us, "that it was a common thing in ancient times, for ſuch kind of men (magicians) to contend one with another." Probably, therefore, the magicians entered into this oppoſition with Moſes, merely with a view to the trial of their abilities in performing feats of wonder; without any regard to conſequences further than victory was concerned.

The other conſideration that ought to have been attended to by Pharaoh was, that the ſerpent into which Aaron's rod was turned, ſwallowed up the ſerpents from the rods of the magicians. This was not only an aſtoniſhing circumſtance in itſelf, but ought to have convinced all who knew

it, of the ſuperiority of the power by which Moſes acted, over the power and art of the magicians.

From this conſideration, let us learn the danger thoſe people run, who, from corrupt hearts and wicked purpoſes, reject ſuch evidences of the truth as are ſufficient for the conviction of reaſonable men. God hath eſtabliſhed the chriſtian religion, among other things, by the authority of miracles. The evidence that ſuch miracles were wrought, is contained in the hiſtorical books of the New Teſtament. The authenticity and credit of thoſe books are as well aſcertained, as the authority and credit of any old books can be. If we reject them, we muſt reject all writings of equal antiquity, and what is worſe, we reject the authority of God, and expoſe ourſelves to his judgment, which commonly ſhows itſelf in what is called blindneſs of heart and mind; that is, in an incapacity of accurately diſtinguiſhing truth from falſhood in other matters: And, indeed, people of obſervation will perceive that moſt of thoſe who reject the evidences of chriſtianity, are as eaſily impoſed upon by romantic ſtories and improbable fictions as any people in the world—are more ſuperſtitious, and believe on leſs evidence, when religion is out of the way, than any other people will do. For the reſiſting of reaſonable evidence in one caſe, blinds the mind and perverts the judgment, ſo that they cannot perceive what is reaſonable evidence in other caſes. Pharaoh would not be convinced by the miracle of Moſes' rod being turned into a ſerpent, that Moſes acted by divine authority: And

yet he was convinced from the rods of the magicians being turned into ſerpents, that Moſes did not act by divine authority. So ſtupid is incredulity when exerted againſt the belief of that evidence by which God makes known his power and wiſdom in the world.

DISCOURSE I.

PART THE THIRD.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF PHARAOH.

IMMEDIATELY after the recital of the miracle of Aaron's rod being turned into a ſerpent, it is remarked, "The Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuſeth to let the people go." The miracle intended for his conviction had a contrary effect, and made him more obſtinate in his reſolution to keep the Iſraelites in ſervitude. God, therefore, commanded Moſes to meet him, the next morning, at the river, whither he intended to go, either for the ſake of bathing, or to pay his adoration; that river being eſteemed one of the principal deities of Egypt. The buſineſs of Moſes was again to demand the diſmiſſion of the Iſraelites, that they might worſhip God in the wilderneſs. He was alſo to declare to Pharaoh, that, unleſs he conſented, he would ſmite the river with his rod, and all the waters of Egypt ſhould

become blood. Moſes did as he was commanded; and upon Aaron's ſtriking the river with the rod, it, and all the rivers, and pools, and ponds of water in Egypt, became blood, and ſtank, and the fiſh died. Diſtreſſed with drought, the Egyptians digged near the river for water to drink.

This miracle had as little influence on Pharaoh as the former one; for "the magicians of Egypt did ſo with their enchantments;" that is, they alſo turned water into blood; "and Pharaoh's heart was hardened; neither did he hearken unto" Moſes and Aaron, as the Lord had ſaid, but "turned and went into his houſe; neither did he ſet his heart to this alſo." He became more obſtinate and ſullen; would give himſelf no trouble to conſider the matter, but let it paſs, without even reflecting, that though the magicians had imitated the miracle of Moſes, yet, by turning water into blood, they had increaſed and not alleviated the diſtreſs of the Egyptians.

There is an intimation in the laſt verſe of the ſeventh chapter of Exodus, that the effect of this miracle continued ſeven days. It ſeems then to have been withdrawn by the goodneſs of God, unſolicited by Pharaoh or any one for him. To puniſh with reluctance, is the character which the inſpired writers give us of almighty God. He is ſlow to anger, and doth not willingly afflict the children of men. For this reaſon it is that God, except in the caſe where utter exciſion is intended, not only withdraws his judgments upon repentance, but alſo when he ſees that no repentance will be pro-

duced by them. When judgments are designed to correct and amend, if they fail of this end, why should they be continued? To punish for the sake of punishment is no property of God. "Why should you be stricken any more?" said he, by Isaiah, to his old people; "ye will revolt more and more." So totally were they corrupted, that there was no prospect of their amendment, even by the judgments of God.

Suppose the judgment inflicted by the miracle which turned the waters of Egypt into blood, to be intended for the conviction and amendment of Pharaoh, and every thing that relates to it will be easily understood. Seven days trial was enough to convince the kingdom of Egypt, that the miracle had been wrought. They saw the waters of Egypt to be only blood, and they saw that their king would not be induced by the distress which lay on his kingdom, or which he personally endured, to submit to the God of Israel. Why continue the distress which produced no further good effect? The power of God had been displayed; his superiority over the Nile, the source of fertility to Egypt, and which the Egyptians considered and adored as a deity, had been made manifest to the whole country. No good effect was likely to be produced on Pharaoh, and God, in mercy, removed the distress from the suffering Egyptians; all of whom cannot be supposed to have been equally criminal with their obstinate king.

God sent Moses again to Pharaoh to demand the dismission of his people, and to inform him

that if he refuſed, the frogs ſhould come up from the river in ſuch abundance, that they ſhould force their way into the houſes and ovens, and kneading-troughs of his ſervants, into his own bed-chamber, and into his very bed. The notice producing no effect, Aaron ſtretched out his hand with the rod in it, over the waters of Egypt; "and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt." "And the magicians did ſo with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt."

It has been noted, that though the rods of the magicians were turned into ſerpents, as well as the rod of Aaron, they could not defend their rods from being devoured by his rod. Again, they ſucceeded in turning water into blood; but they had not power to heal the waters of Egypt, and make them wholeſome and fit to drink. So here, in the plague of frogs, though they ſucceeded in producing thoſe animals, they had no power to drive them away, or deſtroy them. Why elſe did Pharaoh apply to Moſes and Aaron, to intreat the Lord that he would take away the frogs from him and his people, enforcing his requeſt with an explicit promiſe that he would then "let the people go, that they might do ſacrifice unto the Lord?" This promiſe he ought faithfully to have kept, as well on other accounts, as that it was the expreſs condition of his deliverance from great diſtreſs, not only to himſelf, but to his whole kingdom. From his magicians he could obtain no relief. To the interceſſion of Moſes he looked for that bleſſing; and he ought to have conſidered, that the God who

could inflict and remove the plagues, muſt be the God of heaven, whom all things obey; and to have ſubmitted to him, and obeyed his command.

The reply of Moſes when Pharaoh requeſted his mediation, was, "Glory over me"—command me. When ſhall the frogs depart, and remain in the river only? Name your own time. Nothing could be fairer in itſelf, or have a more direct tendency to lead Pharaoh to conſider the power and goodneſs of God, than this ſubmiſſion of Moſes, referring the time of Pharaoh's relief to his own determination. He replied, "To-morrow." Accordingly Moſes intreated the Lord, and on the morrow the frogs died. "But when Pharaoh ſaw that there was reſpite," he forgot his promiſe; "he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had ſaid."

Without ſending any meſſage to Pharaoh, God now commanded Moſes to direct Aaron to "ſtretch out his rod and ſmite the duſt of the land, that it might become lice through all the land of Egypt." He did ſo, and the duſt "became lice, in man and in beaſt, all the duſt of the land became lice through all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did ſo with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not." By their failure God ſhowed that the miracles they had wrought were not performed by their own power and art, but by his hand, and to anſwer his purpoſes. Of this the magicians ſeem, in ſome degree, to have been ſenſible: for of this miracle they acknowledged to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." No effect,

however, had it on Pharaoh, but ſtill further to harden his heart; "and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had ſaid."

Behold the progreſs of obſtinacy in this man! The miracles performed by the magicians ſeem to have been the reaſon why he was not convinced by the miracles of Moſes. Yet the magicians only repeated, they could not counteract what Moſes had done, nor reſcue Egypt from the heavy judgments which, by his miniſtry, were inflicted on it. But here was a miracle which they could not repeat or imitate—which they confeſſed was done by the power of God moſt high. Yet on Pharaoh it had no effect. He had already reſiſted more evidence than a reaſonable man would require. He had broken his word with Moſes when, under the plague of frogs, he promiſed to let the people go, and do ſacrifice unto the Lord. Having thus depraved his judgment by reſiſting clear, and full, and ſtrong evidence; having forfeited his honour, by breaking his word pledged to Moſes, and in a matter in which God was concerned; it was not hard for him to go further in the road of obſtinacy, and to reſiſt the force of this miracle alſo, though in the opinion of his own magicians it was done by the power of God omnipotent.

Thus were matters circumſtanced, when God commanded Moſes to ſtand in Pharaoh's way as he went to the river early in the morning, and to ſay unto him, "Thus ſaith the Lord, let my people go, that they may ſerve me. Elſe, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will ſend ſwarms of

flies," or of noxious venomous inſects, "upon thee and upon thy ſervants, and upon thy people, and into thy houſes: And the houſes of the Egyptians ſhall be full of ſwarms of flies, and alſo the ground on which they go—to-morrow ſhall this ſign be." At the ſame time, God declared that he would protect the land of Goſhen, in which his people dwelt, ſo that no ſwarms of flies ſhould be there—"To the end," ſaid God to Pharaoh, "thou mayeſt know, that I am the Lord in the midſt of the earth." When it is conſidered that, in moſt languages, the word which ſignifies the *earth*, is frequently reſtrained to ſignify a particular country, eſpecially that country of which the diſcourſe treats, there will remain but little doubt, that the meaning of the expreſſion, *I am the Lord in the midſt of the earth*, is, that God was the Lord, the ſupreme king and governor of Egypt; and by the diviſion which he would put between the Iſraelites and Egyptians, he would manifeſt himſelf to be ſo—the great, the almighty diſpoſer of judgments and bleſſings through the land.

According to the word of Moſes, when the morrow came, there came with it "a grevious ſwarm of flies into the houſe of Pharaoh, and into his ſervants' houſes, and into all the land of Egypt: The land was corrupted by reaſon of the ſwarm of flies."

In great diſtreſs, Pharaoh ſent and called Moſes and Aaron, and ſaid to them, "Go ye, ſacrifice to your God in the land." But however he may have been affected by this plague; however his

heart may have relented under the chaſtiſement of thoſe venomous inſects, his offer of indulgence to the Iſraelites to ſacrifice to God in the land of Egypt, was far ſhort of the demand which God had made. It was a compromiſe which Moſes had no right to accept. He, therefore, replied, that it would be improper to accept this offer, becauſe they muſt ſacrifice "the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord their God"—that is, bullocks, and ſheep, and goats, which the Egyptians eſteemed as ſacred animals. Continuing his plea, he alleged, that ſhould they do ſo, the Egyptians would, in all probability, reſent it ſo highly, as to aſſault and ſtone them. He, therefore, inſiſted on his firſt demand—leave to go three days journey into the wilderneſs, that, being out of the obſervation of the Egyptians, they might, without danger of increaſing their reſentment, ſacrifice to the Lord in ſuch manner as he ſhould command them.

To this remonſtrance Pharaoh *then* conſented, and ſaid, "I will let you go, that you may ſacrifice to the Lord your God, in the wilderneſs; only you ſhall not go very far away; and added, as it were in the ſame breath, *intreat for me.* Moſes replied, that he would intreat the Lord that the ſwarms of noiſome flies which filled the country, might depart from Pharaoh and from his ſervants, and that on the very next day. At the ſame time he cautioned Pharaoh, who had once failed of fulfilling his promiſe to him, "not to deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to ſacrifice to the Lord."

When Moſes withdrew, he intreated the Lord; and the Lord did according to the prayer of Moſes: He removed the ſwarms of flies ſo entirely, that there remained not one. But behold the ingratitude and duplicity of Pharaoh! When delivered from the torment of the flies, inſtead of regarding his promiſe, he "hardened his heart at this time alſo, neither would he let the people go." To ſuch meanneſs does the perſiſting in a wicked purpoſe drive infatuated men. The proud and covetous are the moſt apt to fall into it. Pride prevents amendment, by repreſenting a change of conduct to be a confeſſion of having acted wrong: and covetouſneſs cannot bear to relinquiſh any point from which gain is expected. Theſe ſeem to have been the leading properties of Pharaoh's heart, and they conſpired to ſink him into that fatal obſtinacy and wretched meanneſs which ended in his deſtruction.

Notwithſtanding the baſeneſs of Pharaoh's conduct, God ſent Moſes to him again with the ſame requiſition to let his people go, made in the name of the Lord God of the Hebrews. If he refuſed to comply, Moſes was to denounce a very grievous murrain on the next day, which ſhould be fatal to the cattle of the field; to the horſes, and aſſes, and camels, and oxen, and ſheep. At the ſame time, he was to inform Pharaoh, that the cattle of the Iſraelites ſhould be entirely and abſolutely exempt from that calamity.

The fatal day came, and the deſtructive murrain came with it. The cattle of the Egyptians died in great numbers, but of the cattle of the If-

raelites not one. Of this latter circumſtance Pharaoh ſent particularly to inquire, and found it ſtrictly true. This diſtinguiſhing mark of God's favour, however, opened not his eyes; nor did the conſideration which it was obvious to make, that no relief was to be had from the gods of Egypt whom they worſhipped (ſeeing their ſacred animals, equally with their other cattle, were victims to the fatal murrain) abate the pride and obſtinacy of his temper, but increaſed them both—" his heart was hardened, and he did not let the people go."

Without directing Moſes to apply again unto Pharaoh, God commanded to " take handfuls of aſhes, and to ſprinkle it towards the heaven in the ſight of Pharaoh; and it ſhall become," ſaid God, " ſmall duſt in all the land of Egypt, and ſhall be a bile breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beaſt, throughout all the land of Egypt." Moſes did as he was commanded, and the aſhes which he threw up toward heaven infected the air, produced biles with inflammation, upon man, and upon beaſt. Nor were the magicians exempt. Smitten with the bile, they no longer contended with Moſes, but retired from his preſence.

Of the magicians we have nothing ſince their failure in the miracle of the lice. Probably they had attended on all the actions of Moſes, but without any further attempt to imitate his miracles. Probably, too, they had been Pharaoh's principal adviſers, and had dictated to him that conduct, which he had ſo fatally purſued. What now happened to them ought to have convinced them and Pha-

raoh, and all his courtiers and people, that God, in whoſe name Moſes acted, was, in truth, the God of heaven and earth, almighty, ſupreme over all nature, from whoſe power nothing was exempt, to whoſe judgments all wicked, impenitent men were ſubjected, and whoſe bleſſings no ſtrength or influence was able to turn aſide from his choſen objects. Duty, reaſon, common ſenſe and prudence, therefore, required them to ſubmit to this God, and obey his will; particularly to let the Iſraelites go from their ſervitude, as he had commanded Pharaoh to do.

In this caſe, no reaſonable excuſe could be made, no apology for their conduct could be offered. They had ſeen the moſt ſtupendous miracles wrought by Moſes at the command of God, to eſtabliſh the authenticity of his commiſſion, and to chaſtiſe Pharaoh, and his courtiers, and people, for their obſtinacy and incredulity. Yet they believed not, nor ſubmitted themſelves to the will of this God; but ſtubbornly determined to keep the Iſraelites in their ſervice, notwithſtanding all he could do to them.

Perſonal chaſtiſement for their flagitious conduct, the magicians ſeem hitherto to have eſcaped. It now came on them in common with the men and brutes of Egypt. Equally hardened with their maſter, and having, probably, been the principal means of hardening him, deſervedly did they partake in his puniſhment.

At the cloſe of the account of this judgment, it is ſaid, "And the Lord hardened the heart of

Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had ſpoken unto Moſes." The reference from this latter expreſſion is, in the margin of our Bible, made to that text, where God threatens to harden Pharaoh's heart, if he attended not to the miracles which Moſes was to do before him. Pharaoh's obſtinate reſiſtance againſt the other miracles, is expreſſed by his *hardening his heart*, or by his *heart's being hardened.* The two phraſes mean the ſame thing; for Biſhop *Patrick* hath remarked, that the words for both are in the Hebrew text the ſame. There is, therefore, no good ground for the rendering of chap. vii. 13. which our tranſlators have given, *he hardened Pharaoh's heart:* no perſon is named, but only the fact aſſerted, that Pharaoh's heart was hardened. In this ſenſe, the LXX have rendered this verſe, κατ'ίχυσεν ἡ καρδία Φαραώ. In this ſenſe God explains himſelf to Moſes in the next verſe, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened"—βεβαρηται ἡ καρδια Φαραῶ—Pharaoh's *heart is ſtout, is obſtinate.* The ſtate of his heart is declared, but no agent is pointed out.

But in chap. ix. 12. the act of hardening Pharaoh's heart is aſcribed immediately to God. The queſtion then will be, In what way, or rather in what ſenſe, did God harden Pharaoh's heart? Certainly not by infuſing poſitive hardneſs and obſtinacy into it. That would have been counteracting, by his almighty power, thoſe miracles, which his goodneſs had directed his ſervant Moſes to perform for Pharaoh's conviction.

The tenor of God's conduct toward Pharaoh

shows that he treated him as a free agent, endowed with reason, and having a will of his own, and a capacity of determining that will; either to let the Israelites depart from his country at the requisition of God, or to endeavour to retain them in his service. God determined to treat him accordingly—to give him ample and sufficient motives and arguments to convince his reason and judgment, that he who demanded the Israelites of him, was indeed God almighty, the Lord of heaven and earth, and of all things in them. If he complied, all was well: if he refused, the judgments of God were to fall upon him.

God, who knew his proud, and obstinate, and covetous temper, knew the conduct he would pursue; and, therefore, told Moses, he would not let the people go, without a mighty hand. For which reason, said God, "I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof; and after that he will let you go." Exod. iii. 19, 20. Take this with you as a key, and the whole history is intelligible and plain; but, on other ground, it is inconsistent with the nature of God, and not to be understood. For, in fact, Pharaoh did, at last, consent that the Israelites should go, from among his people, according to the utmost meaning of the requisition of God by Moses—go even where they lifted, and take their families, and their flocks and herds with them, and sacrifice to the Lord as they had desired—requesting, at the same time, their blessing on him. Had God hardened Pharaoh's heart, by in-

fuſing obſtinacy and ſtubbornneſs into it, is it poſſible Pharaoh could have acted in this manner? for who, in this ſenſe, can reſiſt the will, or controul the decrees of God?

The ſum of the matter ſeems to be this: The time was come, to fulfil the promiſe made to Abraham; to bring his poſterity out of the land in which they were ſtrangers and ſervants; to judge, that is, to puniſh that nation who had held them in bondage, and to give them the land of the Canaanites, whoſe iniquity was now ripe for the vengeance of God: he, therefore, determined to accompliſh his promiſe. All things are in his hand; and any means he ſhall uſe moſt effectually anſwer his purpoſe. He could have ſent the Ethiopians, or the Phenician ſhepherds to have overrun Egypt a ſecond time, and have delivered his people by their means. Any nation, ſupported by his power, would have reduced Egypt to ſubmiſſion, as the Perſians, Aſſyrians, and Romans afterwards did. There went out from Egypt ſix hundred thouſand of the Iſraelites that were men. And, when numbered, two years after, they amounted, excluſive of the tribe of Levi, to ſix hundred and three thouſand, five hundred and fifty men, fit for war. From this multitude armies might have been formed capable, at leaſt, of forcing their way out of Egypt, had God ſeen proper to make uſe of force, or, indeed, of any human means for the deliverance of his people. But he choſe, in this matter, to act conſpicuouſly by himſelf, that he might convince not only the Egyptians, but the Iſraelites—all who

ſhould hear of his wonders in Egypt, that he alone is God, the Creator, Preſerver, and Governor of all things; the only object of the worſhip and adoration of men; the Almighty, who can do what he pleaſes in heaven and in earth; that he needed not the force of armies to accompliſh his purpoſes, all the elements of the world, all the powers of nature being at his command; that he could make the moſt inſignificant things in the creation, frogs, flies, lice, duſt, the inſtruments of his vengeance on a proud oppreſſor, who deliberately reſiſted his will. He knew, for he knoweth all things, the obſtinate and ſtubborn temper of Pharaoh: that he would not, without great reluctance, part with the Iſraelites, from whoſe ſervitude he acquired both dignity and profit. He knew the perverſe, ſullen, and humorſome diſpoſition of the Iſraelites; that if their own efforts were employed for their deliverance, they would aſcribe the whole ſucceſs of it to themſelves, and ſwell with vain-glory, and confidence in their own arm and military proweſs.

The wiſdom of God ſaw beſt to proceed in a manner that ſhould open a way for the manifeſtation of his power, and majeſty, and goodneſs, not only to the Egyptians and Iſraelites, but to the whole world. To humble the ſtubborn heart of obſtinate Pharaoh, and oblige him, how much ſoever againſt his will, not only to conſent to the departure of the Iſraelites, but to ſend them out of the country by his own order; and to induce the Egyptians to hire them to haſten their departure, by lending, or rather giving them ſuch things as

they required, gold, and silver, and jewels, and clothing: And that the Israelites, observing that no exertions of their own were required, no war, no fighting, no plots or stratagems, but only to "stand still and see the salvation of God," might be the better disposed to ascribe the whole glory of their deliverance to his power and goodness, and the more readily yield their faith, and hope, and obedience to him. Besides,

The wonders wrought in Egypt would be made known to all the nations with whom the Egyptians had any intercourse, and the fear and dread of the God of Israel would be the necessary consequence. The more Pharaoh struggled against the power of God, the more would that power be displayed in his humiliation and destruction: and the greater the difficulties were which attended the deliverance of Israel, the more glorious would that deliverance be in itself, and the more astonishing to all who heard of it; nor could it fail to impress them with the opinion that the God of Israel was the God and Governor of all things, to whom all the elements of the world, and all the powers of nature, were subject; and whose will it was both their interest and duty to obey.

That the obstinacy of the king of Egypt might not discourage Moses, and make him desist from his attempt to deliver his nation, God warned him of that obstinacy, and told him that Pharaoh would not let the people depart from his service, but with a mighty hand; that is, under the infliction of great judgments; yet at the last he would let them

go. Accordingly, every message which Moses carried from God to Pharaoh was precisely the same, without augmentation or diminution, "Let my people go, that they may serve me." If Pharaoh refused, some judgment, which was particularly specified, and the time fixed, was to come on him and his people; if he complied, no judgment was to follow. So that Pharaoh's disobeying, or obeying the requisition of God, was to be treated in a very different manner. In the former case, he became the object of God's justice; in the latter, of his mercy.

What then, it may be asked, are we to understand by God's hardening Pharaoh's heart? I answer, the same that we are to understand by his hardening the heart of any other wicked person. He dealt with Pharaoh by the same rule by which he deals with all others—the rule of justice and mercy—mercy where it can be shown, justice where perversity of conduct has excluded mercy.

It is a common observation, that repeated sinning seareth the conscience; that is, it hardeneth the heart. So that by habit a man may come to commit sins without reluctance, or check of conscience, or any apprehension of the displeasure of God, which, at first, made him shudder and tremble. Those checks of conscience, which were at first very uneasy to him, gradually lose their force, and, at length, give no trouble. In truth, he feels them not; his heart is hardened, and he no longer cares or thinks what God hath commanded or forbidden.

Some things, we know, are ſoftened and melted, while other things are hardened by the fire. Is the nature of the fire different? or is it the different nature of the ſubſtances applied to it, that occaſions the different effects?

When a perſon hath long continued in a courſe of ſin, hath perpetually diſobeyed the known will of God, hath reſiſted the diſpenſation of his providence, the admonitions of his conſcience, the influence of divine grace, the inſpirations of the Holy Spirit, and all the means of repentance and holineſs, ſo that they have no longer any effect upon him, is there any impropriety in ſaying that God hath hardened his heart; though the means by which it is hardened, be the very means which God hath appointed to render it ſoft, and pliable, and obedient to his heavenly will? When the abandoned ſinner hath brought himſelf into this wretched ſtate, where is the injuſtice, ſhould God withdraw his holy ſpirit from him, and leave him to follow his own vile imagination—to that reprobate mind which works all inquity with greedineſs? Whether God withdraws his grace from him, becauſe he will make no uſe of it; or whether he hath ſo hardened his heart, by repeatedly reſiſting and acting contrary to the impreſſions of goodneſs made on him by the ſpirit of God, it comes to the ſame thing; and what is ſaid of the one, may juſt as well be ſaid of the other ſtate. If God take his grace and holy ſpirit from him, his heart will be hardened, and God may be ſaid to harden it; not indeed by infuſing obſtinacy into him, but be-

cauſe he would make no uſe of that grace and thoſe inſpirations of the ſpirit which were intended to render him capable of that obedience to his will which God requires.

All the miracles wrought by Moſes, which are ſometimes called ſigns, were wrought for the conviction of Pharaoh—to be ſigns to him, that the Lord God of the Hebrews, who demanded the Iſraelites of him, was God Almighty. Being wrought by his command, there is no impropriety in ſaying he wrought them. But, inſtead of convincing Pharaoh, they unhappily proved the occaſion of increaſing his obſtinacy. For, whenever they were removed, and he ſaw there was reſpite, he hardened his heart. God is, therefore, ſaid to harden his heart, becauſe what he did for his conviction produced that effect.

This is the moſt that can be made of that expreſſion, conſiſtently with the nature of God and the nature of man. And it ought to convince us of the neceſſity of conforming ourſelves to the will of God, and, on all occaſions, doing what he commands; leſt, by perpetually reſiſting his will, and the evidences of it which he lays before us, we harden ourſelves in iniquity, provoke him to anger, and bring his judgments on us.

DISCOURSE I.

PART THE FOURTH.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF PHARAOH.

WE have ſeen, that when Moſes, at the command of God, ſprinkled aſhes towards heaven, it became a bile, with inflammation, upon man and beaſt, throughout the land of Egypt. So long, and ſo repeatedly had Pharaoh hardened himſelf againſt the miraculous evidence which God gave him that Moſes was indeed ſent to demand the diſmiſſion of the Iſraelites from his ſervice, that it was no trouble to him to reſiſt the force of this miracle alſo. God is, therefore, ſaid to harden his heart, becauſe the means which God uſed for his conviction, only made him more obſtinate in his perverſeneſs and impiety. For which reaſon God ſeems, at this time, to have given him up to his own reprobate mind, and to have paſſed the ſentence of deſtruction upon him. But let us attend to his hiſtory, and take the circumſtances as they riſe there.

Notwithstanding the obstinate behaviour of Pharaoh under the judgment of the biles, and that it was said, God had hardened his heart, Moses was sent again to him, to repeat his original demand—"Thus saith the Lord of the Hebrews, let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will, at this time, send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And, in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth."

It may be necessary here to resolve, if we can, a difficulty which arises, and which, I trust, is fully expressed in the following question: Why was Moses sent again to Pharaoh, after God had hardened his heart; that is, had withdrawn his grace and holy spirit from him, had blinded his reason and understanding, so that it was impossible he should obey?

To this it has been thought sufficient to reply, that God dealt with Pharaoh, as Pharaoh dealt with the Israelites. He demanded of them brick without straw; and God demanded of him obedience, when he was rendered incapable of paying it. To dissent from the opinions of great and good men is painful. But when it is considered, that Pharaoh's demand of the same tale of bricks from the Israelites, after the straw was withheld, which

they uſed to deliver in when they were furniſhed with ſtraw, was unjuſt and cruel, I cannot perſuade myſelf that God would imitate that conduct even towards Pharaoh. Goodneſs and mercy are the rule of all his actions, and nothing inconſiſtent with them ought to be aſcribed to him. Beſides; to ſay that Pharaoh *could* not conſent to the departure of the Iſraelites, becauſe God had hardened his heart, or had entirely withdrawn his holy ſpirit from him, is more than we have a right to ſay. The demand and expoſtulation of Moſes ſuppoſe that he could have conſented; and, without that ſuppoſition, they are irreconcilable to common ſenſe. The fact, too, ſupports this ſuppoſition; for, at the laſt, he did let the people go, and requeſted their bleſſing, which, at leaſt, muſt mean their prayers to God for him.

Whatever, therefore, may be the meaning of God's hardening the heart of Pharaoh, it cannot imply his infuſing hardneſs of heart into Pharaoh, or taking his grace and holy ſpirit from him, ſo that he might not, or could not obey. Theſe ſuppoſitions ſeem to be the ſprouts of Calviniſm, or of that fancied decree of reprobation, paſſed, from eternity, againſt a part of mankind, in order to make the juſtice of God the more conſpicuous to the world, in the puniſhment of their wickedneſs; as if there would be no room for the juſtice of God, without that abominable decree of reprobation. Juſtice conſiſts in treating things according to truth, not in making men bad, for the ſake of inflicting puniſhment upon them. God is ever

represented, in his holy word, as being solicitous, through goodness and mercy, to save men from destruction, but never as being impatient and hasty to punish, even the most abandoned sinner. No impediments will, therefore, be laid by him in the way of any man's obedience; nor grace and strength refused sufficient to enable him to do his duty.

There is another position alleged to justify the conduct of God in demanding the dismission of the Israelites, after he had hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he could not obey him; namely, that God is not deprived of his right to obedience by any incapacity a man brings on himself. But this is shifting the ground, and supposes Pharaoh's incapacity of obeying God to have arisen from *himself*, and not from God's hardening his heart. On this ground, however, I suspect, the position will not bear examination. Hath a master a right to demand the same obedience from his servant, after the servant hath carelessly or wilfully besotted his mind and understanding, or disabled a hand or a foot, so that he cannot fulfil his master's commands? And shall we account for God's conduct on principles which would be a reproach to a good man? Of God's requiring obedience from any man above his capacity, taking into the account the assistance and ability he is ready to give, no instance can be named: A remarkable one to the contrary is ready to our hand. When Adam fell, he weakened and depraved his nature, and deprived it of the holy spirit. Did God continue to

require the ſame obedience of him which, in his innocence, he was able to perform? or did he put him under a new covenant, or rule of life, through the Redeemer, and accept his repentance and faith inſtead of obedience which was without ſin?

God is ſaid to do things immediately by himſelf, when natural means apparently produce the effect. He repleniſheth the earth, and maketh it fruitful; yet the ſun, and air, and rain, the labour and tillage of man, are neceſſary to this end. All theſe God hath provided and appointed, and by his direction they conſpire to produce the effect. Through all nature, the primary cauſe of every thing that happens is in him by whom all nature exiſts and acts. In him we live and move. The energy by which we think and act is from him; but the perverſity of our thoughts and actions is from perverting the powers he hath given to us.

God's hardening Pharaoh's heart, therefore, cannot mean his infuſing any bad quality into him, but that Pharaoh previouſly converted all the means of conviction—all the miracles and judgments of God, into occaſions of obſtinacy and hardneſs of heart, till he rendered himſelf inſenſible of the motions of the ſpirit of God in him. That was his reprobation, and made him ripe for deſtruction. And the purport of the remonſtrance of Moſes was to acquaint him, that God had preſerved him, and hitherto kept him alive, not for his own ſake, but for the ſake of others—not that there was any hopes of his amendment—but to convince him, by awful and certain judgments,

that there was none like God in all the earth. And also, that by cutting him off in some remarkable manner, he might make him such an instance of his power as should declare his name throughout all the world.

To give this remonstrance the more effect, Moses warned him, that if he still exalted himself, and would not let the people go, God would, on the very next day, at that time of it, "cause it to rain a very grievous hail," such as before had never happened in Egypt. To this declaration a kind admonition from the goodness of God was added; namely, to bring all the cattle that were left of the murrain out of the field, and to shelter them, and also their servants, from the storm. Those Egyptians who believed Moses, and for whose sakes, probably, this caution had been given, did as they were directed; and, securing their servants and cattle under cover, preserved them. Others, who disregarded the admonition, left their cattle and servants abroad, and destruction overtook them: for at the time appointed on the morrow, Moses, at the command of God, stretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the storm came; rain, and hail, and lightning, and thunder, dreadfully mixed together, and poured with terrible impetuosity on the ground; very grievous, such as before had never been seen in Egypt. The men and cattle that were in the field were killed; the trees were broken, and all the produce of the earth that was grown up was destroyed. From this horrible calamity the land of Goshen was exempt: no hail fell there, no storm assailed it.

What makes this miracle the more extraordinary is, that little or no rain falls in Lower Egypt: the country is rendered fruitful by the Nile, which, annually overflowing its banks, fills the canals cut through the flat country, and furniſhes water for the gardens and corn grounds.

During this ſtorm, Moſes and Aaron were called to Pharaoh. He ſeems to have been deeply affected by this tremendous ſtorm, and to have formed good reſolutions of amendment. "I have ſinned," ſaid he, "this time. The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye ſhall ſtay no longer." Moſes replied, that as ſoon as he had got out of the city, he would ſpread abroad his hands unto the Lord; "and the thunder," ſaid he, "ſhall ceaſe, neither ſhall there be any more hail; that thou mayeſt know," as well in their removal as in their infliction, "that the earth is the Lord's." But, as for thee and thy ſervants, I know that "ye will not yet fear the Lord God." Moſes did as he had promiſed. He "ſpread abroad his hands unto the Lord; and the thunders and the hail ceaſed, and the rain was not poured on the earth." But behold the vanity of good reſolutions formed in our own ſtrength, of the purpoſes of amendment, which calamities force on us! When the ſtorm was over, and calm and ſunſhine had returned, Pharaoh thought no more of his promiſe or good reſolutions: "He ſinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his ſer-

vants; neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the Lord had spoken by Moses," and as Moses had lately predicted to Pharaoh. In chap. ix. 34. it is said, that Pharaoh "hardened his heart." In the 35th verse, it is said, "and the heart of Pharaoh was hardened." In chap. x. 1. it is recorded, that the Lord said, "I have hardened his (Pharaoh's) heart." How it may appear to others, I know not: to me it appears, that these three phrases, relating to the same event, under the same circumstances, must mean the same thing: they express the fact, that Pharaoh's heart continued hard, and obstinate, and unrelenting, when the storm of hail was over; notwithstanding the goodness of God, in warning the Egyptians to take care of their servants and cattle under the impending calamity, and in making the storm to cease at Pharaoh's request and promise of submission. Infatuated by his own headstrong will, and following the dictates of his obstinate temper, he set himself against those judgments that were intended to reclaim him, and would not permit them to have their natural influence upon him; but, sinning yet more, would not let the Israelites depart from his service.

God having informed Moses that he had hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he should have an opportunity of showing all the signs which he intended to do before him, and the Israelites an opportunity of telling their children, through all posterity, the great things he had done for them in Egypt: that all might be convinced and know

that he alone was to be adored, God ſent him again to Pharaoh, to rebuke him for his pride, and to repeat his firſt demand. Coming with Aaron unto Pharaoh, he delivered the following meſſage: "Thus ſaith the Lord God of the Hebrews, how long wilt thou refuſe to humble thyſelf before me? Let my people go, that they may ſerve me."

This meſſage was followed by a declaration of the unhappy conſequence of rejecting his demand; namely, that the locuſts ſhould be in his country the next day, and in ſuch numbers that they ſhould cover the face of the earth; that they ſhould force themſelves into their houſes, and eat up every green thing which had eſcaped the deſtruction of the hail. Having delivered his meſſage, he waited not for an anſwer, but turned, and went out from Pharaoh.

In dread of the conſequence of what Moſes had ſaid, the great men of Pharaoh's court interpoſed, and remonſtrated with him. "How long ſhall this man be a ſnare unto us? Let the men go, that they may ſerve the Lord their God: Knoweſt thou not yet that Egypt is deſtroyed?" On this remonſtrance, Moſes and Aaron were called back to Pharaoh. He propoſed to them, that the men of Iſrael, leaving their families and flocks behind them, ſhould go and ſerve the Lord; pretending that to be the full import of their firſt demand. But when Moſes inſiſted upon taking their families and all their cattle with them, he angrily refuſed—charged them with evil intentions; that

is, with the design never to return; and he drove them out from his presence.

After this outrage, Moses, at the command of God, stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt. A strong east wind followed, and blew till the next morning, when the locusts appeared, and in such numbers that they covered and darkened the country, and devoured every green thing in it.

The destruction of Egypt seems to have been nearly completed by this visitation. In haste, therefore, Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, "and said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you;—forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the Lord your God that he may take away from me this death only." Moses went out, and intreated the Lord; and such was his goodness upon the appearance of compunction even in Pharaoh, that he "turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea: there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt." But so great was the obstinacy of Pharaoh, and so little his respect for his own word, that he regarded not what had passed, nor the promise he had made. The history adds, "The Lord hardened his heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go."

Thus hardened in his opposition to the will of God, there was no prospect of doing any good to Pharaoh. To punish him and the Egyptians for their obstinacy; to deliver his own people from slavery, and thereby fulfil his promise to Abraham;

to make himſelf known to the world as God Almighty, ſupreme over every thing that exiſts, the only object of faith, and obedience, and adoration, ſeems to have been the purpoſe of God in the latter judgments inflicted on Pharaoh. Without any further meſſage to Pharaoh, God, therefore, commanded Moſes to ſtretch out his hand toward heaven, that there might be thick darkneſs, ſuch as might be felt throughout all the land of Egypt.

Moſes did as he was commanded, and the darkneſs came ſo thick and terrible, that it confined the Egyptians to their places three days; while the children of Iſrael were bleſſed with light in Goſhen. Extreme muſt have been their diſtreſs, ſince it obliged Pharaoh to call to Moſes, and ſay, "Go ye, ſerve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be ſtayed; let your little ones alſo go with you." Moſes replied, that they muſt have ſacrifices and burnt offerings, ſuch as God ſhould command; their cattle, therefore, muſt go with them. Here the relenting of Pharaoh ended, and paſſion ſucceeded in its place. The Lord "hardened his heart, and he would not let the people go." To his refuſal he added threats: "Get thee from me," ſaid he to Moſes; "take heed to thyſelf; ſee my face no more; for in that day thou ſeeſt my face, thou ſhalt die."

But however peremptory his threat was, and however poſitive the anſwer of Moſes, "Thou haſt ſpoken well; I will ſee thy face again no more;" the next chapter informs us, that he delivered to

Pharaoh the meſſage contained in it, (Exod. xi. 4—8.) This meſſage conſiſted of a denunciation of deſtruction, impending on the firſt-born children of Egypt, to be inflicted in that very night, from the firſt-born of Pharaoh to the firſt-born of the meaneſt ſervant; and alſo on the firſt born of cattle. Moſes alſo declared that God would put a diſtinction between the Iſraelites and the Egyptians; none of the Iſraelites ſhould die; no diſaſter ſhould happen to them; in their habitations all ſhould be peace and quietneſs, not even a dog ſhould move his tongue againſt any of them: but that in Egypt there ſhould be a great cry and lamentation, through the bitterneſs of their diſtreſs: and that the ſervants of Pharaoh, who were then in his preſence, ſhould come down to him, and bow themſelves unto him, and humbly intreat him and his people to depart out of the land—"After that," ſaid Moſes, "I will go out: and he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger."

This reading, in our Bible, leads us to ſuppoſe that Moſes was violently angry when he left Pharaoh; looking more to the provocation he had received, than to the exceeding meekneſs of his temper. Good Hebrew critics, however, aſcribe the anger to Pharaoh, and teach us to tranſlate the paſſage, and Moſes *went out from Pharaoh, who was in a heat of anger.*

Previouſly to this laſt interview of Moſes with Pharaoh, God had, by him, commanded the Iſraelites to take every family of them a lamb for itſelf. The paſſover, at which the lamb was to be

facrificed, was inftituted, and its intention and fervice were explained. Now they were ordered to kill and eat the paffover, in the evening of that day in which Mofes had delivered the above recited meffage to Pharaoh. They were alfo directed to mark, with a bunch of hyffop, dipped in the blood of the lamb, the two fide-pofts, and the lintel, or upper crofs-piece of the frame of their doors, as a fecurity againft the deftroying angel, who, that night, was to pafs through Egypt, to deftroy the firft-born. When they had done fo, they were to remain quietly in their houfes, and not to go out from under the protection of the blood until the morning. Following thefe directions, they refted fecurely under the protection of the blood that was on their doors.

But, at midnight, the Lord fmote all the firft-born of the Egyptians, from the higheft to the loweft, of man and of beafts. The lamentation, and confufion, and diftraction, of this fcene, can more eafily be imagined than defcribed—"There was not a houfe where there was not one dead."

In dreadful confternation Pharaoh rofe up in the night, called for Mofes and Aaron, and faid to them, "Rife up, and get you forth from among my people, both you and the children of Ifrael; and go, ferve the Lord as ye have faid; alfo take your flocks and your herds, as ye have faid; and be-gone, and blefs me alfo."

Nor were the Egyptians lefs alarmed than their king, or lefs urgent to get the Ifraelites out of their country. "We," they exclaimed, "are all dead

men." Readily, therefore, they gave to them ſuch things as they wanted to accommodate them for their journey; and willingly did the women reſign their jewels and raiment to the Hebrew women, to fit them for wandering in the wilderneſs, and probably to engage them to hurry their huſbands out of the country.

Thus thruſt out of Egypt, the children of Iſrael went from Rameſes in Goſhen, toward the head of the Red Sea, and aſſembled at Succoth; a place probably ſo called from the booths they built there. Their number was about ſix hundred thouſand Iſraelites who were men, beſides their children; and, beſides, a mixed multitude of Egyptians and ſtrangers, who, in all likelihood, had been in ſlavery with them. Their flocks and herds accompanied them, in number very great. This event happened four hundred and thirty years after the exodus of Abraham out of Chaldea, and one hundred an twenty-nine years after their ſlavery commenced in Egypt.

Thus did God begin to fulfil the promiſe he had made to Abraham, that although his poſterity ſhould be afflicted and oppreſſed, he would deliver them, and would judge the nation who ſhould hold them in bondage; after which he would give them the land of the Amorites for a poſſeſſion, (xv. 13.) How he delivered them we have ſeen, and his judgments on Egypt in order to accompliſh his purpoſe. And Moſes informs us, that, "at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the ſelf ſame day, it came to paſs, that the hoſts of

the Lord went out from the land of Egypt, (Exodus xii. 41.)

In the judgments God inflicted on Egypt, Pharaoh bore the principal part, becauſe he was the principal perſon concerned in the oppreſſion of the Iſraelites, and in holding them in ſlavery. And becauſe, being of a proud, cruel, and obſtinate temper, God choſe to humble him by his judgments, and oblige him to ſubmit to his authority, in order to convince the Egyptians, the Iſraelites, and all nations who ſhould hear the wonders he had wrought, that the God of Iſrael was the Lord God Almighty, commanding the earth, the air, the water, the clouds, the thunder, the light, the hoſts of devouring inſects: that there were none called gods among the nations that could do as he did; and, therefore, none beſides him who ought to be feared and worſhipped.

The obſtinacy of Pharaoh proceeded from his proud, cruel, and covetous heart. The ſtation of dignity and power which he held among the Egyptians, and over the Iſraelites, had confirmed thoſe tempers ſo ſtrongly, that he would brook no controul. Inſtead of being wrought upon and mollified by the miracles and ſigns which God cauſed to be wrought before him, he hardened himſelf againſt them, ſo long and ſo repeatedly, that, at laſt, God gave him up to his own proud imaginations—to follow the ſuggeſtions of his own reprobate heart—made reprobate, not by God, but by his obſtinate ſinning againſt full evidence, and a ſtrong conviction, that he acted againſt the will

and commandment of God, who required the dismission of the Israelites from their servitude to him.

If we suppose God to have infused any hardness of heart into Pharaoh, or to have passed any decree of reprobation against him, except in consequence of his wilful and repeated sin, we shall run ourselves into difficulties from which nothing can free us. For,

1. God hath no bad properties or qualities in himself, consequently no hardness of heart. What he hath not, he cannot communicate to others.

2. After it is said, God hardened Pharaoh's heart, more messages were sent to him, more admonitions were given him, more miracles were wrought for his conviction. This conduct, had God passed any decree of reprobation against him, and entirely deprived him of his grace, and the inspirations of his spirit, is irreconcilable with the principles of common sense, of reason, of justice; and mercy and goodness declare directly against it.

3. Through the whole transaction God treated Pharaoh as a person who had a will of his own, and could command his own actions—either let the Israelites depart, or keep them in bondage. Long did he refuse to part with them, as the Lord had forwarned Moses. He did, however, at last, consent, and the Israelites did go. No decree of God, therefore, had passed against his permitting the Israelites to go out of Egypt; and yet that is the very point with respect to which God is said to harden his heart.

God, no doubt, could have taken the Israelites

from under the power of Pharaoh, by various means: or he could have taken Pharaoh out of the world, as he ſeems moſt juſtly to have deſerved. But God determined, in delivering Iſrael, to humble Pharaoh, who boaſted that he knew not the Lord, nor would diſmiſs the Iſraelites at his command. Judgments, therefore, were ſent thick upon him: when one ceaſed another ſucceeded: that he might *be made to know the Lord*, and obliged to diſmiſs his people. Under theſe judgments he was preſerved a monument of God's power, a declaration to the world, that the God who afflicted Pharaoh was *alone the God of heaven and earth*, almighty and irreſiſtible. To the force of theſe judgments his proud heart at length ſubmitted. After often relenting, and often returning obſtinately to his purpoſe, convinced of the folly and vanity of ſtriving againſt God, he conſented to the departure of the Iſraelites, and humbly intreated them to leave his country.

The fault of Pharaoh, therefore, was his ſuppoſing his own power ſuperior to every thing in the world, and ſetting up his own will in oppoſition to the will of God, who demanded the diſmiſſion of his ſlaves: his reſiſting the full evidence, that God had ſent Moſes to make this demand in his name: his ſtifling the admonitions and checks of his conſcience when his heart relented, and returning again to his fooliſh and obſtinate purpoſe; acting ſo long in oppoſition to the convictions of his own mind, that he rendered himſelf inſenſible of the motions of the ſpirit of God in him, and incapable of

judging of the tendency of the dispensations of his providence. When this became his unhappy situation, God gave him up to his own imaginations—to follow the dictates of his own proud and corrupt heart, which drove him on, in folly and sin, to his final destruction.

It is our business to avoid the fatal errors of Pharaoh. Duty, therefore, requires us to regard the admonitions of God by his word and by his ministers; to attend to the check of conscience, his vicegerent in us; to observe the dispensations of his providence; and to let them have their full effect on us; to comply with the motions and inspirations of his spirit in us, when they check us in evil, or excite us to that which is good. Ever remembering, that obstinate and wilful sinning against the means of grace, the admonitions of conscience, the events of Divine Providence, the motions and solicitations of the spirit of holiness, will harden the heart, and render it incapable of being governed by them; indeed, insensible of them. The sentence of reprobation will then pass against us, as surely as it did against Pharaoh. It is, in truth, the very state of reprobation. We express it, or rather it is expressed to us, by God's withdrawing from us his grace and holy spirit, because we make no, or an ill use of them. But it is an expression accommodated to human infirmity. To us there is eventually no difference, whether by hardening the heart through repeated acts of wilful sin, we render ourselves incapable of obeying the motions of the spirit of God, or whether he

take them from us. "To him that hath," ſaid the bleſſed Jeſus—that obeys and follows the motions of God's ſpirit—"ſhall be given;" they ſhall be continued and increaſed, "and he ſhall have abundance." "But from him that hath not"—that makes no, or an ill uſe of the grace of God, and of the influence of his ſpirit, "ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath." God is the ſame now he ever was. He altereth not, nor changeth. The ſame rule which guided his conduct to men, in the days of Pharaoh, guided it alſo in the time of Chriſt's humanity, and ſtill guides it. He is "no reſpecter of perſons, but will render to every man according to his deeds. In every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him." But the obſtinately and impenitently wicked ſhall feel his indignation and wrath, in tribulation and anguiſh, whenever it pleaſeth him to take account of their actions.

DISCOURSE I.

PART THE FIFTH.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF PHARAOH.

HOWEVER the proud heart of Pharaoh was broken down by the deſtruction of the firſt-born, the impreſſions of goodneſs continued not long. Hardened in ſin by long and wilful habit; and, by the juſt judgment of God, deprived of his favour and of the motions of his ſpirit; when the firſt ſhock was over, he returned violently to his old track, inflamed by reſentment and the thirſt of revenge. The pride of his heart aroſe again, and his obſtinate temper recovered its former perverſe bias. Great and urgent as the occaſion had been, and right as his conduct was in diſmiſſing the Iſraelites, forgetting the authority of God, and all he and his kingdom had ſuffered from the exertions of divine power, he repented of his ſubmiſſion, and was no ſooner told that the Iſraelites were actually gone, than his heart, and the hearts of his ſervants, turned againſt them: "Why have

we done this," they haſtily aſked, "that we have let Iſrael go from ſerving us?" And immediately Pharaoh made ready for war, and purſued after them.

It is remarked, that God led not the Iſraelites out of Egypt by the ſhorteſt rout to Canaan, through the country of the Philiſtines, becauſe the Philiſtines were a warlike people, and would probably oppoſe them, and the Iſraelites were unprepared for war, both in arms and in diſcipline, and were incumbered with flocks and herds, women and children. But God led them by the Red Sea, into a country that was wild and deſert, where they would meet with no enemy, at leaſt not till they came to the borders of Canaan; by which time they would be inured to the fatigue and order of marching and encamping, and to the uſe of arms by exerciſe and diſcipline. Whether by their taking this rout, Pharaoh was led to ſuppoſe they would find their marching impracticable, and being ſhut in by the wilderneſs and the Red Sea, would fall into deſpair, and become an eaſy prey to his army; or, whatever other imagination occupied his perverſe heart, we have a right to ſay, the hand of God was in it. He hardened the heart of Pharaoh, not by infuſing hardneſs or obſtinacy into it, nor by paſſing any decree that it ſhould be hardened, but by this very rout which he directed the Iſraelites to take. It deceived Pharaoh, and led him to deſtruction.

The reaſon why God had preſerved Pharaoh now ceaſed. He had ſhown his power over him before

the Egyptians, and Israelites, and the whole world: He had given the fullest and clearest testimony that *he alone was God in heaven and in earth*; that he had the command of all the elements, and made them subservient to his will; that the beasts of the earth were in his hand, and were governed at his pleasure;* that he was the Lord of life and death, and could preserve his own people, as well as strike the first-born of the Egyptians all dead in an instant. He had, moreover, broken down the stubborn heart of Pharaoh, long hardened in sin, and obstinately determined not to submit to his will; and had obliged him to send his people, whom he had determined, at all risks, to keep in servitude, in freedom out of his country.

In the judgments by which this event had been accomplished, Pharaoh, and his servants, and people, were remarkably punished for their cruelty and oppression of the Israelites, and for their proud and arrogant opposition to the command of God. And had Pharaoh been quiet, and suffered that people to have gone off unmolested, after he had dismissed them, I see no reason to suppose, that destruction, or any further judgment from God, on their account, would have come upon him. But God saw that the submission of Pharaoh was only temporary; that the pride and hardness of his heart would soon return; that he would follow the

* Some critics have supposed, that the word translated *swarms of flies*, should be, *a mixture of noisome beasts*, and so it is rendered in the margin of our Bibles, viz. lions, tigers, &c.

Iſraelites, and endeavour either to reduce them again to ſervitude, or deſtroy them. He, therefore, laid this ſnare for him; that if he fooliſhly purſued, he might bring ſuch deſtruction on himſelf, now that Divine Providence had nothing more to fulfil by his living, as might manifeſt and render conſpicuous the power, and majeſty, and juſtice of God; moſt effectually break the ſtrength of Egypt; and ſecure his people from immediate moleſtation: and, at the ſame time, might convince the Iſraelites, that as he was able to deſtroy the Egyptians, and ſave his own people by ways and means of which they never thought, ſo he was equally able to conduct them through the wilderneſs in ſafety, and ſettle them ſecurely in Canaan, againſt all oppoſition which their enemies could form. The natural conſequence to be drawn from this conviction was, that they ought to put their truſt in him, to worſhip, and ſerve, and obey him punctually, and with all their heart.

Pharaoh, having taken the mad reſolution of purſuing the Iſraelites, ſet out with all the horſe of his army, that he could aſſemble on ſo ſudden an emergency: particularly with ſix hundred choſen chariots of war, and all the chariots of Egypt; and overtook the Iſraelites encamped by the Red Sea. For, inſtead of leading them from Etham, where they encamped when they moved from Succoth, directly into the wilderneſs of that name, by the head of the Red Sea, God directed Moſes to turn to the right hand, and march down the border of the ſea, and encamp at Pihahiroth, between Migdol

and the ſea. By *Pihahiroth*, ſome critics tell us, is denoted *a gap in the mountains*, which, on that ſhore, form the bank of the ſea, and render it inacceſſible, but through that gap. Accordingly they tranſlate this paſſage, *encamp before the gap Eiroth*, which, they ſay, was its name. However this be, at Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the ſea, over againſt Baal Zephon, Pharaoh found them encamped.

When the Iſraelites ſaw the Egyptian army approach, in dreadful conſternation they "cried out unto the Lord," for help. Severely, too, did they upbraid Moſes for bringing them out of Egypt, as if Egypt could not have afforded graves to bury them; proteſting that it had been better to ſerve the Egyptians, bad as that was, than to periſh miſerably there by the relentleſs army of Pharaoh.

To judge merely from their ſituation, and leave God their protector out of the account, they had, indeed, reaſon more than enough for their deſpondency. From Pharaoh they could expect no mercy, hard-hearted as he was, and enraged at what he had lately ſuffered. On their left, was the Red Sea, deep and impaſſable. On their right, lay Egypt, from which they had lately departed. In their front was a country, on account of its mountains, impracticable for large bodies of people incumbered with women, and children, and herds of cattle. And, in their rear, was the numerous army of Pharaoh.

The greatneſs of their danger did not make it more difficult for God to deliver them; and their

gratitude, probably, would be greater, the greater their danger had been. Great as it was, the fortitude of Moſes forſook him not; nor did the reproachful remarks of the Iſraelites excite any reſentment in him. "Fear ye not," ſaid he to them, "ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord, which he will ſhow you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have ſeen to-day, ye ſhall ſee them again no more forever."

Their deliverance was to be eminently the work of God, and, therefore, no efforts of theirs were required, leſt they ſhould pretend to ſhare the glory of their deliverance with him, or ſay that their own ſtrength or courage had ſaved them.

At this time, Moſes ſeems to have been employed in prayer and ſupplication to God. From his faith and piety we might naturally expect, that devout and earneſt intreaty would flow from his heart to the Almighty Protector of him and his people. "Why crieſt thou unto me?" ſaid God to him; not blaming him for praying, but intimating that it was a time for action, as well as for prayer: "Speak unto the children of Iſrael, that they go forward;" that is, through the gap *Eiroth*, toward the ſea. "But lift up thy rod, and ſtretch out thy hand over the ſea, and divide it; and the children of Iſrael ſhall go on dry ground through the midſt of the ſea. And I, behold I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they ſhall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his hoſt, upon his chariots, and upon his horſemen."

It was towards the close of day when Pharaoh came up with the Israelites. Whether too late to make an immediate attack upon them, or whether he waited till the darkness should add to their confusion and distress, we know not. Unarmed and undisciplined as they were, he could have no fear of much resistance, and seems to have had no apprehension of their escaping from him. But, that he might not fall upon the Israelites in the night, the angel of God, and the pillar of a cloud, which hitherto had gone before them to conduct them in their march, removed, and went behind them, between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. To the latter it gave light, while, to the former, it was a cloud of darkness, which effectually prevented any operations against the Israelites.

Moses having, in obedience to God, extended his rod over the sea, a strong east wind,* which blew across the head of it, where the Israelites passed, divided its waters, and made an open and dry passage for the Israelites, who, guided by the light from the cloud behind them, went through the sea on dry ground, the water standing in heaps, like a wall, on each side of them. Inconsiderate Pharaoh, with his chariots and horsemen, followed

* Or south-west wind, according to the lxx. This seems the most probable, and I should prefer it, if the Hebrew word will bear it: and that it will, Bishop Patrick cites the authority of Bochart. The sea was divided by a strong wind, which blew across it—if from the eastward, it would be directly in the faces of the Israelites, and make their march difficult and slow. If from the westward, it would be in their backs, and would not impede them.

them into the ſea, never more to return out of it. For,

" In the morning watch, the Lord looked unto the hoſt of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the hoſt of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot-wheels that they drove them heavily." They, therefore, attempted to return from the purſuit, convinced that the Lord fought for the Iſraelites againſt them.

As ſoon as the Iſraelites had all paſſed over, and the Egyptians, with their diſabled chariots, were ſtruggling to return, Moſes, by divine command, ſtretched forth his hand over the ſea, and the ſea returned to his ſtrength when the morning appeared, overwhelming the Egyptians fleeing and ſtruggling againſt it. Of all the chariots and horſemen which purſued the Iſraelites, not one eſcaped; all periſhed in the ſight of the Iſraelites, who ſtood ſecurely on the further ſhore, and beheld the deſtruction of their enemies.

Thus periſhed the proud and haughty Pharaoh, and his no leſs proud and haughty army, in one of the moſt fool-hardy and ridiculous enterprizes that man ever attempted. When Moſes firſt demanded the freedom of the Iſraelites in the name of the Lord, he ſternly replied, " I know not the Lord, neither will I let Iſrael go." The many ſevere judgments he ſuffered, and the evident diſtinction made between the Iſraelites and the Egyptians, in the extent and operation of the miracles that were wrought, would have convinced any reaſonable

man, that God, who demanded the Iſraelites, was *God Almighty:* he who had made the heaven and the earth, and who commanded all the elements and powers of them; and that he was the particular guardian and protector of Iſrael. Unawed by all that had happened, he abſurdly imagined, that, with an armed hoſt, he could recover from the hand of God the people whom he had lately been obliged, againſt his will and utmoſt oppoſition, to give up to him. Blinded with pride and rage, he heedleſſly purſued them; and, in the darkneſs of the night and of the cloud that was before him, he does not ſeem to have been ſenſible that he had got into the bed of the ſea, till the diſorder of his chariots, from the breaking or loſing of the wheels, or (as ſome have ſuppoſed) from their ſinking deep into the mud, informed him, he had got on ground improper for his army.

It was the beginning of the night, when the angel of God and the pillar of the cloud took their ſtation between the camp of Iſrael and of Egypt. Immediately after, Moſes ſtretched out his hand over the ſea, and it was divided. We cannot ſuppoſe that the Iſraelites ſtayed long before they entered the gulph, for they had been put in motion before Moſes ſtretched out his hand. The Egyptians, perceiving by the noiſe, or by the little light they had, that the Iſraelites were moving from them, attempted to follow, that they might not eſcape; for, as ſoldiers, they had nothing to fear from them. It was in the morning watch when the diſorder of their chariots obliged them to re-

tire; and it was day when the sea, returning to its place, overwhelmed them.

The Jews divided the night into four watches. The first began at six o'clock, and lasted till nine; the second continued till midnight; the third till three o'clock; and the fourth, called the morning watch, till six. The distress of the Egyptians began, therefore, after three o'clock, probably just at day-light. They, consequently, entered the bed of the Red Sea in the night, which, by the interposition of the cloud, was made supernaturally dark. Deceived by that darkness, and eager in the pursuit of the Israelites, they may not have known where they were. And, from their confidence that the Israelites were between them and the sea, may have been apprehensive of no such disaster as befel them, till it was too late to retire.

This seems to be the best apology for the infatuated conduct of Pharaoh. For, if, on the other hand, we suppose that he knowingly and designedly followed the Israelites into the bed of the sea, no conduct could have been so void of common sense, or so consummately rash and foolish. He must have known that the opening in the water was apparently made by the force of a violent wind, for the continuance of which he had no security, even for one minute. He must have been sensible that the God of Israel commanded all the elements of the world at his pleasure, and that they all had been, in turns, made the instruments of dreadful calamities to him and his people, on account, too, of those very Israelites whom he then pursued. He

muſt alſo have felt, that the horrible darkneſs of the night took from him the capacity of judging, with due preciſion, of any thing before him. Under theſe circumſtances, to riſk his own ſafety, and the ſafety of his army, by attempting a paſſage of ſeveral miles, made through the ſea by the force of the wind, only to gratify his rage and thirſt of revenge againſt the Iſraelites, exceeds all conception of human folly.

In the account of the cataſtrophe of Pharaoh, the expreſſions, " the Lord looked unto the hoſt of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the hoſt of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels;" and the exclamation of the Egyptians, " the Lord fighteth for Iſrael againſt the Egyptians," have given ſome trouble to fix their meaning.

To a perſon who believes the power and particular providence of Almighty God, and the miniſtry of his mighty angels, I ſee not that thoſe expreſſions ought to give the leaſt embarraſſment. If, however, we wiſh to accommodate them more to human comprehenſion, let us ſuppoſe that the Egyptians had got in the bed of the ſea, without knowing on what ground they were: let us further ſuppoſe, that extreme darkneſs prevented them from ſeeing the water heaped up like a wall on each ſide of them. From what hath been obſerved, theſe circumſtances are highly probable. Only, then, continue the ſuppoſition, that, juſt at daylight, the bright cloud which had illuminated the Iſraelites, was ſuddenly turned to the Egyptians,

and discovered to them their real situation, and their danger from the mass of water on either side of them, just ready to pour down on their heads. Is it surprizing that they should endeavour to escape from such a scene; that they should fall into confusion in the attempt; that their chariot-wheels should entangle and lock together, be broken, or torn off, or, by mere sinking in the sand, should drag heavily?

The Lord is said to look through the pillar of *fire* and the cloud. This gives probability to what *Josephus* hath related (Jud. Antiq. lib. ii. ad finem), that a dreadful tempest of thunder, and lightning, and hail, from this cloud, assaulted the Egyptians. Lay all these circumstances together, and that the Egyptians should be frighted, astonished, confounded, and should cry out, in despair, "*Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians*," can give surprize to no one.

Thus did God, in his anger, destroy the Egyptians, and, in mercy, save his chosen people; literally fulfilling what Moses had predicted to them in their deep distress; "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day. The Lord shall fight, and ye shall hold your peace."

To this scene, most applicable are the words of the psalmist, which, if they do not particularly describe, seem to explain the manner in which the Lord looked upon, and troubled, and fought against the Egyptians in the Red Sea: "The

clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was heard; the lightnings shone on the ground; the earth was moved and shook," (Ps. lxxvii. 17, 18.) Every token and instrument of Almighty displeasure, every circumstance that could strike terror into the human heart, or make the wicked feel or dread the vengeance of an incensed God, seem, at this time, to have been poured upon the heads of the abandoned Egyptians.

From such scenes let us learn to fear, and, by obeying him, avoid the strokes of God's displeasure. Penitence and faith, through the atonement of Jesus, will recommend us to the arms of his mercy, and open to us the gate of everlasting life. And,

"From scenes like these, we" may "learn to form an idea of that power which discomfited the infernal host; raised Christ from the dead; vanquished opposition and persecution; subdued the world to the obedience of faith; supports and protects the church; will overthrow antichrist; raise the dead; cast the wicked, with death and satan, into the lake of fire; and exalt the righteous, to sing, with angels in heaven, 'the song of Moses, and of the lamb:'* Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints," (Rev. xv. 3.)

Thus have we pursued the conduct of Pharaoh, from the first message sent to him by God, to the fatal event in the Red Sea. That pride and obsti-

* Horne on Ps. lxxvii. 17, 18.

nacy were his firſt faults muſt be evident; and dreadfully did he pay the penalty of them.

Many reflections which will be of uſe to the prudent man may be drawn from this hiſtory that has been before us, with ſome of which I purpoſe to conclude this diſcourſe. But it ſeems reaſonable, to attend, in the firſt place, to an obſervation which, I preſume, every perſon will make on reading the hiſtory of Pharaoh. In all the miracles and events produced by the alone power of God, ſome outward and viſible means were directed to accompliſh his purpoſe.

In what we call the productions of nature, it is eaſily diſcernible that the powers of nature are only the energy of God operating in his works, and not any influence they have independent on him; that is, the power of God, which firſt ſpoke them into being, ſtill operating on them, produces thoſe effects which we call natural. Whether this be neceſſary for man, compoſed as he is of body and ſoul, that there may be ſomething to affect his bodily ſenſes, and point out to him the inward operation of God on the ſoul, by his outward operation in that external ſomething which he hath appointed to indicate and effect his purpoſe, is a diſquiſition which it is not neceſſary for us to ſettle. The uſe of external means, we know, is of ſervice to gain credit to the meſſengers of God; and point out to men, that he hath ordered thoſe meſſengers to work ſuch miracles, by the uſe of ſuch means, as cannot poſſibly have any natural effect that way;

and, therefore, that he hath sent them, and speaks and acts through them.

Most of the miracles in Egypt were apparently wrought by virtue of the rod of Moses. This rod was, probably, the staff he carried in his hand when he tended the flocks of Jethro, and could have no virtue in it to produce the effects which followed upon the use of it, more than it had to convert itself into a serpent. It was, however, the instrument which God directed Moses to use in performing the wonders which he wrought. God wrought in it and by it, and could have operated as well without it, had he so pleased.

That we might assuredly know this, and ascribe its whole efficacy to God, and not to the rod, some miracles were wrought without its intervention; namely, the judgment of the swarms of flies, and the murrain among the cattle. This circumstance teacheth us,

1. That Moses, who used his rod, and wrought miracles with it only at the command of God, was really his messenger, and was aided by his authority.

2. It should make us careful in the use of all those means which God hath appointed for us in his holy religion, and to employ them devoutly in the manner he hath directed; and then to entertain no doubt of their efficacy to the purposes for which they are appointed. In this sense, the Sacraments in the christian Church become essentially necessary for us, where they can be had. Nor have

we more reaſon to expect the grace of God, and thoſe bleſſings which are exhibited by the Sacraments, without the uſe of them, than Moſes would have had to expect the miraculous interpoſition of God, without the uſe of his rod, when God commanded him to ſtretch it forth. And to doubt of the efficacy of the Sacraments, is the ſame infidelity in us, that it would have been in Moſes to have doubted of the efficacy of his rod, when God commanded him to employ it.

3. It ſhould teach us not to attribute any ſanctity or efficacy to Sacraments independent of God's appointment; but to aſcribe their whole efficacy to him who hath ordained, and operates in them.

But, in ſome of the miracles in Egypt, other means were ſometimes uſed beſides, or inſtead of the rod. The locuſts were brought, and the Red Sea was divided by a ſtrong eaſt wind, even when Moſes had employed his rod by God's command. No rod was ſtretched forth when the biles with inflammation infeſted the Egyptians: That judgment was produced by ſprinkling aſhes towards heaven in the ſight of Pharaoh. For though God, in the operations of nature, hath confined himſelf to fixed rules of acting, it is for our ſakes he hath done ſo, that we might know what events to expect from certain cauſes: yet, in thoſe operations which are beſide, or beyond the powers of nature, he is not confined to particular means, nor, indeed, to any means at all, but can operate without, or by any, as he ſeeth good. However, when he hath

appointed means for us, they become obligatory on us. Nor have we a right to expect the blessings annexed to them, if we use not the means appointed for the conveyance of them.

DISCOURSE I.

PART THE SIXTH.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY OF PHARAOH.

THE attentive mind will readily remark, that few of the judgments of God came upon Pharaoh without previous notice, generally of one day, that if he continued obſtinate, ſuch or ſuch a thing ſhould happen to him. When he was threatened with the ſtorm of hail, and apprized of its dreadful violence, he and his ſervants were adviſed to ſhelter their ſervants and cattle againſt its fury. When he was under the correction of any judgment, and requeſted the interpoſition of Moſes to deliver him from it, it was always, and ſpeedily, removed on his interceſſion.

Theſe are inſtances of the goodneſs of God, who does not willingly puniſh, nor puniſh any but obſtinate offenders. Nor was his goodneſs confined to Pharaoh. To us, to all men, he hath graciouſly made known the dreadful conſequence of a wicked, impenitent life. He hath alſo adviſed and

directed us to shelter ourselves against the storm of his anger, by penitence and faith in Jesus the Redeemer, and obedience to him, according to the best of our power. If we regard not his warning, we shall fare as did the servants and cattle of Pharaoh, and the incredulous Egyptians—sink under the blast of God's displeasure.

The reflections which I shall make on this subject will be drawn from the temper of mind which Pharaoh's conduct discovered, and will principally relate to our practice.

It hath been observed, that the original faults of his temper were pride and obstinacy. They generally go together. Obstinacy, indeed, seems to be the natural offspring of pride. To give up a point, or recede from a sentiment, would, in the opinion of the proud man, lessen his dignity, and sink him in the estimation of others. He, therefore, obstinately pursues the point to the end, be it right or wrong, of great or of little importance, good or evil in its consequences.

Another certain effect of pride appears to me to be covetousness. I mean not that none are covetous but proud people; though, I fear, proud people always are so: not merely of money, but of all things in which they think their interest, or honour, or dignity is concerned. Every thing of this kind, they, as much as possible, arrogate to themselves, and endeavour to manage in such a way as shall secure and increase their own importance.

Pride, and obstinacy, and covetousness, if not necessarily, yet certainly produce cruelty, or a con-

duct towards others void of humanity; if not always, yet in moſt inſtances.

Theſe ſeem to have been ſtrong lines in Pharaoh's character. His pride made obedience and ſubmiſſion to the will of God ſevere, if not impracticable duties. His obſtinacy prevented him from ſeeing, or, at leaſt, from attending to the evidence which God laid before him, that he had ſent Moſes to require the diſmiſſion of the Iſraelites from their ſervitude, and made him perſiſt in his determination to keep them at all events. His covetouſneſs led him to conſider their detention in ſlavery as eſſential to his own wealth and dignity, as well as to the dignity and proſperity of his kingdom; and his cruelty excited him to uſe every mean, however inhuman, that could break their ſpirits, and render them more ſubmiſſive, or prevent their increaſing to ſuch numbers as he feared would endanger the ſafety of his kingdom.

We have ſeen the fatal iſſue of Pharaoh's conduct. To avoid every part of it, we muſt avoid the tempers which led him to it, and which, if indulged, will lead us to deſtruction, if not equally open and apparent, equally fatal and dreadful. The nature of God is the ſame it ever was; and the tempers of men, in all ages, are the ſame, and, under the ſame circumſtances, will ever produce the ſame effects. Pride, and obſtinacy, and covetouſneſs, and cruelty, are ever the ſame in themſelves, and in their effects—deſtructive to men, odious to God. Be it our conſtant care to keep them under, by denying and controling every tendency toward them

which we find ſtirring in us. Pride ſeems to be the root of them all, and is the grand obſtruction to our obedience and ſubmiſſion to God—the great ſource of that reſtleſſneſs and impatience under the diſpenſations of his providence, which we often feel, and too often indulge, when our worldly affairs proceed not as we wiſh, or had planned. To the ſame ſource we may trace thoſe angry reſentments, and that deſire of revenge which ſprings up in us under a ſenſe of ill uſage, or the opinion of neglect: and, between revenge and cruelty, the diſtinction is too nice to be eaſily marked.

Pharaoh, educated in a court, and advanced to a throne, had the natural pride of his heart unhappily increaſed by the ſubmiſſion that was paid him, ſo that he could brook neither ſuperior nor contradiction. We who are not kings, nor have been educated in the courts of kings, may ſuppoſe ourſelves ſecure from that odious pride which was both the reproach and deſtruction of Pharaoh. But pride was not peculiar to Pharaoh, nor is it the property of kings and courtiers alone. Although not made for man, it is deep rooted in the human heart; and when not checked, but foſtered by education, it becomes the bitter root from which ſprings every noxious weed. Though not flattered by courtiers, we may have been petted by parents and flattered by friends, and the pride of our hearts ſo increaſed and ſtrengthened as to give a diſagreeable tincture to all our converſe and conduct. Happy will it be for us, if it go no farther—if it do not bring obſti-

nacy, and covetouſneſs, and cruelty, in its train; for miſery and deſtruction will ſurely follow.

Obſtinacy prevented Pharaoh from ſeeing, at leaſt from regarding the force of the evidence which God cauſed to be laid before him; and the longer he continued to reſiſt that evidence, the weaker and more depraved became his judgment; till, at laſt, he was incapable of determining aright in a very plain and important buſineſs. Let his behaviour at the Red Sea be an inſtance to prove this point. Now obſtinacy, that is, a determined reſolution to follow our own opinion and will at all adventures, will forever, under the ſame circumſtances, produce the ſame effects. It would as ſurely now weaken and deprave our judgments concerning the will of God revealed in the holy ſcriptures, the nature of Chriſt's church, the doctrines of the goſpel, and every thing that relates to eternal life; and prevent our feeling the force of the evidence on which they depend, as it prevented Pharaoh from feeling, that is, acting, according to the force of the evidence which Moſes placed before him. To get perfectly free from obſtinacy, pride muſt be baniſhed from the heart: it is the ſtock of every vice. Cut down the tree, and you deſtroy the body and branches of all evil tempers and paſſions. Should ſhoots ſpring from the roots, care will keep them under, and, in time, they will die and periſh.

From the hiſtory of Pharaoh we learn, that his heart, hard as it was, ſeveral times relented under

the preſſure of God's judgments. The frogs, the ſwarms of flies, the ſtorm of hail, the locuſts, the groſs tangible darkneſs, each in its turn, made ſo much impreſſion on his ſtubborn diſpoſition, that he ſent for Moſes and Aaron; begged to be delivered from the preſent calamity; and promiſed, on that condition, to let the Iſraelites depart as they had required. It is true, on all theſe occaſions, he endeavoured to obtain ſome mitigation of the terms on which they were demanded—that their children or their cattle ſhould be left behind, as a ſecurity for their return—or that they ſhould go a very little way: nor did he keep his word when the judgment was removed, but returned to the habitual bent of his mind.

He acted as moſt other wicked people act. He was ſorry that his ſin ſubjected him to puniſhment, and wiſhed to retain the ſin, but to get rid of the puniſhment as ſoon as he could. When, therefore, he ſaw, that, by the goodneſs of God, there was reſpite from the puniſhment which he ſuffered, he kept to his firſt reſolution, not to let the people go, and thereby increaſed the obſtinacy of his temper.

Similar obſervations have been made on people in ſickneſs. While they ſuffer, and the proſpect of death is open before them, they are very penitent, and full of good reſolutions. But no ſooner does health return, but their penitence and good reſolutions are forgotten; they return to their old ſins and evil habits with greater avidity, and become more hardened, and worſe than they were before.

The caſe of Pharaoh, therefore, is not a ſingular one, whatever its particular circumſtances may have been. Let us ever guard carefully againſt a conduct ſo baſe in itſelf, and ſo provoking to God. It always hardens the heart, and makes it more careleſs both of the mercy and anger of God. Our greateſt ſecurity is in amendment while we are in health; for on our own future purpoſes and good reſolutions no great dependence can be made, eſpecially when the paſſions of the mind and appetites of the body are weakened and brought low by pain and ſickneſs. With health they will return to their ſtrength, and our good purpoſes will probably vaniſh before them.

It is highly probable that Pharaoh was encouraged in his oppoſition to the demand of God, and in his obſtinate reſolution to abide by his firſt purpoſe to keep the Iſraelites in bondage, by the advice and flattery of his wiſe men or magicians. According to a prevalent tradition among the old Jews, the two moſt eminent of thoſe men, Jannes and Jambres, to whom they add another by the name of Sanidas, accompanied Pharaoh in his expedition, and periſhed with him in the Red Sea. The fatal conſequence of their advice and perſuaſion ought to be an admonition to us, not to ſuffer the wits and flatteries of plauſible, deſigning men, to lead us away from the plain declarations of God, in his holy word, or from the unity of his church, to which he hath promiſed external life. If we do, we ſin after the example of Pharaoh beguiled by his magicians. And if we partake in his ſin; that

is, if we ſin from an evil, hard heart of unbelief, and continue impenitent in it, as he did, we cannot think it ſtrange if we partake alſo in his puniſhment—not by literally drowning in the Red Sea, but by being given up of God to our own reprobate mind, to fill up the meaſure of our iniquity in this world, and ſink into the gulph of miſery in the world to come. Repent, therefore, while it is "to-day"—delay it not till to-morrow—"leſt any of you be hardened through" the deceitfulneſs of ſin, "and God" ſwear in "his" wrath, "you ſhall not enter into his reſt."

It hath been made an objection to the honeſty and ſincerity of Moſes, that he demanded of Pharaoh leave for the Iſraelites to go three days journey into the wilderneſs, to hold a feaſt unto the Lord their God, which plainly implied an intention of returning when the feaſt was ended: whereas he had no intention of returning at all; but to go, and drive out the Canaanites, and take poſſeſſion of their country: that Pharaoh's ſuſpicion of their not returning was the true reaſon why he refuſed to let them go; having ſeveral times offered to comply literally with their requeſt, if they would leave any pledge behind them—their children, or their flocks and herds—to enſure their return.

It is certain that Moſes delivered the preciſe meſſage to Pharaoh with which he was charged from God. It is alſo certain, that God intended, at this time, to deliver his people from their bondage in Egypt, and to ſettle them in Canaan, ac-

cording to his promife to Abraham. Whatever infincerity is fufpected to have been in the bufinefs, muft be charged to God, who gave the direction. By exactly doing as he was ordered, Mofes hath kept himfelf free from blame.—It does not, however, appear by what rule of honefty or morality God was obliged to open his whole intention to Pharaoh. The demand that was made was enough to try his temper, whether he was difpofed to obey God. And why make the demand higher? Why lay open the full purpofe of God to a man not difpofed to obey him? or till it was known that he had a difpofition to obey him? The trial to be made was a trial of the ftate of Pharaoh's heart. The demand of leave for three days journey was enough for that purpofe. Had Pharaoh confented, it is impoffible to fay what the precife conduct of God toward him would have been, further than that the Egyptians would have been exempt from all punifhment.

The Ifraelites were the peculiar people of God, by a covenant made with their anceftors. They were held in bondage by Pharaoh upon the pretence, that his predeceffors having conquered the country in which they refided, had a right to make flaves of them. God had foreſeen their bondage, and had promifed to deliver them, and the time for the fulfilment of his promife drew near. Leave for them to go three days journey was demanded, and was repeatedly refufed. We have a right to fay that the procedure of God with Pharaoh, upon his refufal, was reafonable, juft, and

equitable. Nor have we any right to suppose, but that, had Pharaoh consented, the conduct of God would have continued to have been reasonable, just, and equitable towards him.

The objection we have been considering leaves us to inquire for some reason, why God permitted his peculiar, covenanted people, to fall into such vassalage and oppression, as required great wonders and severe judgments to deliver them?

The display of the power and justice of Almighty God, which was made in the deliverance of Israel, had a direct tendency to check the world, and especially the Egyptians, in their progress in idolatry, into which they seem to have been hasting, and fast sinking, by convincing them that the Lord God of the Hebrews was the only God, who ruled the heaven and the earth, the elements of the world, and all the powers of nature, as he pleased: nor would the display of God's power in Egypt be of less service to the Israelites, than to the Egyptians. They saw it exercised before their eyes, and for their benefit: they found themselves secured from the judgments which the Egyptians endured, and, at length, delivered by them from the thraldom they suffered. Highly favoured as they were by God, who proclaimed himself to be the God of their fathers, they would, the more likely, continue in his worship and service, and not turn away to the worship of the gods of the heathen, who could neither save nor help those who trusted in them.

Another reason why God permitted his people

to fall into bondage, may have been to prepare them, by the diſcipline of affliction, for that religious and civil œconomy under which he intended to place them; the fundamental principle of which was, that he only was God, the Creator, Preſerver, and Governor of heaven and earth; who had brought them out of Egypt, and ſettled them in Canaan: that, therefore, they ought to worſhip and ſerve him only, and obey him in all things, and in the preciſe manner which he ſhould command.

But, it is highly probable, that in the long ſojourning of the Iſraelites in Egypt, both their religion and their manners had been corrupted by their converſation with the Egyptians, and the abſolute power they exerciſed over them. Their after conduct in the wilderneſs ſeems to indicate as much. That they had a ſtrong propenſity to idolatry, appears from the molten calf which Aaron made. And the reluctance with which they conformed to the directions of God ſhowed itſelf, as in other inſtances, ſo particularly in the conduct of Nadab and Abihu, who offered incenſe with ſtrange, that is, with common fire, when God had ordered it to be done with fire from the altar; and in the rebellion of Corah and his company. Their departure from the ancient ſimplicity and rectitude of manners, and their compliance with the idolatrous rites of the Egyptians, may have made it neceſſary for God to chaſtiſe them by affliction, in order to bring them back to a ſenſe of their duty, and convince them that he alone was

God, and alone to be worshipped and obeyed. Their bondage and hard usage would also make them more willing to leave Egypt, whenever it should please God to order them to do so; and more thankful for their deliverance, and for the blessings of freedom and a happy establishment in the land of Canaan.

The pious christian will excuse my adding one reason more, why God suffered his people to fall into a state of hard and apparently irremediable servitude in Egypt, previous to his bringing them out from thence. It is a reason which, I confess, I consider as a principal one, and to have been chiefly intended by Almighty God, in that dispensation of his providence.

It is only by analogy with temporal things, that we can have any notion of things that are spiritual and eternal. All our thoughts and all our expressions about God, and spirit, and religion, and another life, are drawn from corporeal objects, from ideas which we get by our own senses, and apply them, by accommodation, to spiritual subjects. Nor does it appear how we could get any notion, or form any sentiment of the tyranny of evil spirits over the soul, or of the hard bondage of serving corrupt lusts and passions, but from the rigorous oppression and hopeless misery of the body from the arbitrary dominion and severe exactions of unjust and cruel men.* The hard bondage of sin and

* On this subject I would recommend to the American Clergyman the three following books, which, I have reason to think, are not common in America, and, therefore, not as much read as their merit deserves—

ſatan into which the whole human nature ſunk by the apoſtaſy of Adam; the wretchedneſs which hath ſince attended every man born into the world; the impoſſibility that man ſhould relieve and reſtore himſelf; the rage and malice of his grand adverſary againſt both him and every mean of his happineſs, and his utter inability to reſiſt him, we have been taught by the inſtruction of God, and experience convinceth us that his inſtruction is true.

If, therefore, God ſuffered his choſen people to ſink into oppreſſion and wretchedneſs, under the tyranny of the Egyptians, ſo that there was no human hope of help for them; if he permitted nothing to interfere in their deliverance but his own arm and power; if he delivered them in direct contradiction to the fixed determination and ſtubborn oppoſition of their mercileſs oppreſſors, by means utterly beyond the contrivance of human wiſdom, and the efforts of human power; and, in that event, deſtroyed their relentleſs enemies in the moſt aſtoniſhing manner—it exhibits ſuch a repreſentation and picture of the miſery of the world, under the tyranny of the devil, of ſin, and of death; of the mercy, and goodneſs, and love, and power of God, in its deliverance by the mediation and atonement of Jeſus Chriſt, both God and man, as no other earthly ſcene could poſſibly make—a repre-

The Procedure, Extent, and Limits of Human Underſtanding—Things Divine and Supernatural conceived by Analogy with Things Natural and Human—The Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation, not from Reaſon or Nature. The laſt by John Ellis, D. D. The two former are anonymous.

sentation which we can easily understand, which we must feel to be real and true; and by it have our faith confirmed, that as God did save his people, the Church of Israel, from the tyranny and malice of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who were destroyed in the Red Sea; so he will finally complete the salvation he hath already begun, of his people, the Church of Jesus Christ, by casting its enemies, the devil, sin, and death, into the lake of fire preparing for the devil and his angels. (Rev. xx. 14.)

In terms taken from temporal blessings, the prophets generally speak of the divine favour and salvation of Messiah; and in the same terms, the blessed Redeemer Jesus applied what they had said to himself: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Isa. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18.) To the spiritual blessings of the all-gracious Redeemer, let us raise our thoughts from these expressions of temporal good things: they are figures of better things, more precious hopes, more excellent blessings, than any that can be enjoyed in this world; and ought to fix our faith on him as the anointed of the Father, sent to make known the gospel of salvation to man made poor and wretched by his apostasy from God; to heal the heart broken by the thraldom of sin, and penitent through a due

ſenſe of its evil nature; to preach deliverance to the captives of ſatan and death; recovery of ſight, through his atonement, to the mind blinded with error, with ignorance of God and of life eternal; to ſet at liberty thoſe who are bruiſed with the hard ſervice of vicious luſts and domineering paſſions, and bring them into the perfect freedom of the ſons of God; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord—the day of ſalvation—the ſeaſon of his merciful viſitation to all the ſons of loſt Adam who will hear and regard him, and turn from the ſervitude of ſin to the free obedience of his law.

This is the end of all the diſpenſations of God to fallen man, to bring him back from his apoſtaſy, and reſtore him to that ſtate in the creation for which he was originally deſigned; that, under the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, he may live and be happy in perfect obedience and abſolute dependance on God his Creator. When this is done, all is done that can inſure happineſs to us: and till this be done, nothing is done to effect in our ſalvation. To bring this about is the deſign of Chriſt's mediation, and of all he ever did or ſuffered for us. To make us fully ſenſible of the want and neceſſity of his interpoſition, God permitted his choſen people to fall into hard bondage in Egypt. To aſſure us of the certainty and perfection of redemption through Chriſt, he fully and perfectly delivered his people at the Red Sea, and overwhelmed their enemies in horrible deſtruction. To demonſtrate the poſſibility of our rendering void, by our ſins and evil deeds, the redemption of Chriſt, as

far as we are perſonally concerned, God gave up thoſe whom he had brought out of Egypt, to periſh in the wilderneſs, becauſe of their impenitency and unbelief. To convince us that the redemption of Chriſt will be completely effectual to all who obey God, Joſhua and Caleb were conducted into Canaan, according to the promiſe he had made, on account of their fidelity and obedience.

Theſe conſiderations will, I truſt, have their full weight. Then ſhall we rejoice in penitence for our ſins, in faith and obedience to God, in reſignation to his will, in the ſenſe of his mercy and goodneſs, in the power of his grace, in the diſpenſations of his providence; and, under the inſpirations of his Spirit, ſhall live in the ways of holineſs, and die in the hope of glory through Jeſus Chriſt.

DISCOURSE II.

MERCY AND JUDGMENT.

ROM. ix. 18. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

THIS Text being often misunderstood, at least misinterpreted, I have thought it best to endeavour to point out its sense and meaning, according to the Apostle's discourse in which it occurs. It will, I trust, thereby appear, that it contains no position or doctrine inconsistent with the notion I have, in the preceding discourse, given of God's hardening Pharaoh's heart.

The instance of Pharaoh, in this chapter, is introduced by St. Paul, to illustrate the justice of God in rejecting the Jews from being his covenanted people, and consigning them over to punishment, on account of their impenitency and hardness of heart, and calling in the Gentiles to be heirs of the promises made to Abraham.

The Jewish converts to christianity strongly insisted that the Gentiles who embraced the faith of Christ, should submit also to circumcision and the

obſervance of the law of Moſes. This they did from the opinion of its neceſſity, in order to obtain *righteouſneſs*, that is, *juſtification*, or the *remiſſion of ſins* from God, which they ſuppoſed was confined to the Moſaic law. This, indeed, ſeems to have been the chief ſtumbling-block of the Jews, and the principal reaſon of their generally rejecting the goſpel. However willing they may have been that the Gentile converts ſhould, as chriſtians, be admitted to equal privileges with themſelves, they could not bear that they ſhould be exempt from the ceremonial law which they ſuppoſed was neceſſary for them to obſerve, becauſe God had made it neceſſary to ſalvation.

Not only to ward off the ill effects of this opinion, but entirely to root it out, ſeems to have been the deſign of St. Paul, in writing his epiſtle to the Jewiſh chriſtians at Rome. In it he goes to the bottom of the matter, and endeavours to convince both Jews and Gentiles, that *righteouſneſs*, *juſtification*, *remiſſion of ſins*, that is, freedom, or exemption from puniſhment on account of ſin, could not be obtained by the Jews through the law of Moſes, becauſe that law denounced a curſe againſt every one who continued not in all things written in it, to do them; and becauſe they had all been ſinners againſt it, doing thoſe things which it prohibited, and ſo were liable to the curſe denounced by it: nor could the Gentiles be free from puniſhment by the law or light of nature under which they lived; becauſe they had broken it by their idolatry, and other grievous crimes and im-

moralities, and were, on that account, condemned of their own conſciences.

They muſt, therefore, both Jews and Gentiles, embrace the goſpel, become chriſtians, and rely on the atonement and ſatisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt for the forgiveneſs of ſins. And, having received the goſpel which promiſed forgiveneſs of ſins and eternal life through faith in Jeſus Chriſt, the Gentile muſt not deſpiſe the Jew on account of his attachment to the law; nor ought the Jew to require obedience from the Gentile, nor conſider himſelf as obliged to obey it.

To this account of the method of obtaining remiſſion of ſins, the Jews would object, that they were Abraham's ſeed, to whom the promiſes of God were made; and that it was abſurd to ſuppoſe that God would exclude them from the bleſſings promiſed—implying forgiveneſs of ſins, and acceptance with God, becauſe they were ſinners; and, accept the converted Gentiles, who were not included in the promiſes, to all the bleſſings of them, though they were alſo ſinners againſt God.

To purſue his argument, it became neceſſary for the Apoſtle to aſſert that God had rejected the nation of the Jews from being any longer his covenanted people, on account of the hardneſs of their hearts, and untractable diſpoſition. In anſwering the objection, he aſſigns the reaſon of this diſpenſation of God.

The objection conſiſts of two parts, which he anſwers diſtinctly. He firſt diſtinguiſheth between the ſeed, children, poſterity of Abraham accord-

ing to the promiſe, and according to the fleſh. Iſhmael was Abraham's firſt-born ſon; born after the promiſe of Canaan was made to him, and entered into the covenant of circumciſion at its firſt inſtitution: yet Iſaac, at that time not born, inherited the promiſe; for God ſaid, "My covenant will I eſtabliſh with Iſaac, whom Sarah ſhall bear unto thee." And that the Jews might not object to this inſtance, as though Iſhmael had offended God, and was excluded for his wickedneſs, St. Paul adds the further inſtance of Jacob and Eſau, twin children of Iſaac, and, conſequently, children of the ſame mother; neither of whom could be ſuſpected of having offended God, for they were not yet born into the world, and could have done neither good nor evil: yet God preferred Jacob to be heir of the promiſe before Eſau. All the natural children of Abraham were not, therefore, the children to whom the promiſe belonged, for they inherited it not.

As to the children of Jacob, to whom the other part of the objection relates: To reject them, and call in the converted Gentiles to inherit the bleſſings which had belonged to them, was, according to the judgment of God, a puniſhment for their infidelity and oppoſition to the ſtrong and clear evidence which had been before them, both from ſcripture and miracles—that Jeſus was Meſſiah, the Son of God. By reſiſting this evidence, and refuſing to be convinced by it, they had rendered themſelves like Pharaoh, hard in heart, and obſtinate againſt the truth, deſervedly obnoxious to puniſh-

ment, and incapable of being benefited by the bleſſings promiſed to Abraham. For,

By the children of Abraham cannot be meant his natural deſcendants; for then Iſhmael, and Eſau, and the children of Ketura, would not have been excluded, but the children of his faith—they who believed and obeyed God as he did. And if the Gentiles deſerved this character, through their faith in Chriſt, "who is over all, God bleſſed forever," they, in truth, are Abraham's ſeed, and the heirs of the promiſes made to him, which the unbelieving Jews now unjuſtly claimed, and from which they are juſtly rejected by the righteous judgment of God.

With God there can be no unrighteouſneſs; and this procedure with the Jews, rejecting them for their unbelief and impenitency, was perfectly agreeable to the declaration he had formerly made to Moſes; I "will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will ſhew mercy on whom I will ſhew mercy." (Exod. xxxiii. 19.)

Let it be remembered, that this declaration of God was made to Moſes concerning the Iſraelites, who had fallen into idolatry in the matter of the golden calf, and had made themſelves naked by their ſin; that is, had deprived themſelves of the divine preſence and protection—had broken and cancelled the covenant of their God, inſomuch that he threatened to conſume them in a moment. But, on the interceſſion of Moſes, he again took them ſo far into favour as to promiſe to go with them, and conduct them to the land he had given

them. On this occaſion he proclaimed it to be a principal part of his glory to diſtribute mercy and judgment to offenders, according to his own good pleaſure. No more, therefore, was done by God for the idolatrous Gentiles, in receiving them into his church, that is, making them his covenanted people, upon their converſion to chriſtianity, than had been formerly done for the idolatrous Jews, in taking them again to be his people, after the ſin of the golden calf.

The principle on which this reaſoning is founded could not be controverted by the Jews. It was drawn from a text of their own Scripture; from the ſolemn declaration of the Lord God of the Hebrews himſelf, and made on a very ſolemn occaſion. The application, too, was fair and pertinent, and fully juſtifies the Apoſtle in the inference he draws from it: "So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſhoweth mercy;" that is, God preferred Iſaac to Iſhmael, and Jacob to Eſau, uninfluenced by the earneſt deſire of Abraham, who, in requeſting of God, "O that Iſhmael might live before thee," *willed* that Iſhmael might be the favoured ſeed: and equally uninfluenced by the *running*, the haſty endeavours of Eſau to procure the veniſon which his father longed to eat, that he might, in bleſſing, tranſmit to him the promiſe of God. But the mercy of God ſhowed to Iſaac and to Jacob, in making them heirs of the bleſſing promiſed to Abraham, was of his own free grace, and mere

good will towards them, juſt as it pleaſed him who knoweth beſt on whom to beſtow his favours.

The Apoſtle further illuſtrateth this matter by the inſtance of Pharaoh, to whom God thus ſpoke by Moſes: "Even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhow my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."

In the obſervations on the hiſtory of Pharaoh it was ſhown, that the meaning of the expreſſion, "I have raiſed thee up," is, *I have preſerved thee under my judgments*—have kept thee alive, and not ſuffered thee to fall by them, as thou haſt deſerved; that thy puniſhment might be the more remarkable, and my name and power might be made known to the world. The Apoſtle then applieth the rule which God had declared to Moſes, as being exemplified in the caſe of Pharaoh; "therefore," for this reaſon, in this manner, "hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

The Apoſtle, it is true, varies the expreſſion of the latter part of the text; probably to make it comport better with what is ſaid of God's hardening Pharaoh's heart. But it hath been ſhown, that the expreſſion cannot be interpreted to mean that God infuſed hardneſs or obſtinacy into his heart, or in any way prevented his obeying him in letting Iſrael go from his ſervice, without contradicting the whole tenor of the hiſtory. Beſides, God repeatedly declared to Moſes, that Pharaoh would, at laſt, let them go; though not till a

mighty hand and a ſtretched-out arm obliged him to comply.

That, on ſeveral occaſions, Pharaoh hardened his own heart, is particularly aſſerted. So that the moſt that can be made of God's hardening his heart amounts to this:

1. That God permitted the magicians to work ſome miracles of the ſame kind with thoſe of Moſes, and that, by thoſe miracles, Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

2. That, in mercy, God removed his judgments when Pharaoh requeſted it; and, by his lenity, Pharaoh's heart was hardened in obſtinacy: "When Pharaoh ſaw there was reſpite, he hardened his heart." Finding that Moſes would intercede for him, when any judgment preſſed too hard upon him to be longer endured; and that God regarded the interceſſion of Moſes, he ſeems to have leſs regarded the threat of the next calamity; preſuming, perhaps, that ſhould it be inflicted on him, he could prevail with Moſes to intercede for its removal.

Under the operation of either of the plagues, had it continued, Pharaoh muſt have conſented to the departure of the Iſraelites, or ſunk under it: or, while the Egyptians were all ſore with biles and inflammations; or fixed in their places by thick darkneſs, the Iſraelites might have gone unmoleſted from Egypt; none could have followed them. But then it would not ſo manifeſtly have appeared, that the God of the Hebrews was ſuperior to all nature; that he commanded all its powers, and all

the elements of the world; that the iſſues of ſickneſs and health, of life and death, were in his hand: in ſhort, that he was God Almighty, the only object of the faith and worſhip of reaſonable beings.

3. That when Pharaoh had hardened his own heart ſo repeatedly and deſperately that he became inſenſible, or incapable of the motions and inſpirations of the ſpirit of God, God gave him up to his own devices; that is, left him to himſelf; but preſerved him from immediate death, to make him a conſpicuous example of his juſtice—a monument to the world of his majeſty and power.

What, then, we are to underſtand by God's hardening Pharaoh's heart, is, that when, by abuſing the goodneſs and lenity of God, Pharaoh had hardened himſelf beyond the influence of God's grace, and mercy, and miracles, God determined to puniſh him, and deſtroy him from the earth; but yet, in a way, the moſt conducive to his own glory and the good of mankind.

In this matter God acted neither capriciouſly nor unjuſtly, but on an eſtabliſhed and fixed principle—that "he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth;" that is, that he will extend mercy to ſinners, or inflict puniſhment on them, as it pleaſeth him, according to his own goodneſs, and knowledge, and wiſdom, and not according to the paſſions and partialities of human nature.

On this principle no injuſtice can be charged to God. If he forgive one ſinner and puniſh another, it is not from caprice or mere arbitrary will, but,

becauſe he ſees that truth and juſtice demand it—his glory and the good of the creation require it. But, to make this diſcrimination, he hath reſerved to himſelf, and will ſuffer no being to interfere in it; nothing being adequate to it but infinite goodneſs, and mercy, and knowledge, and wiſdom.

Nor could the Jews juſtly object to their being caſt off from being God's covenanted people, on this principle. The lenity of God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Hear what God ſaith to the Jews, by the mouth of his Apoſtle, in this epiſtle: "Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering; not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds." Both Pharaoh and the Jews abuſed and deſpiſed the goodneſs of God, and both ſuffered unexampled, though merited deſtruction.

When, indeed, the Apoſtle wrote, the judgments of God had not been fully inflicted on the nation of the Jews: They had not completed the meaſure of their iniquity. The long-ſuffering of God yet bore with them: but the ſentence of deſtruction had paſſed againſt them. From the mount of Olives, the meek and holy Jeſus, to whom all judgment is committed, had beheld their city: and, while the tears of affection flowed down his

cheeks, pronounced their doom: "If thou," Jeruſalem, "hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." (Luke xix. 42.) But Jeruſalem knew not, ſhe conſidered not, nor regarded the merciful viſitation of God by Jeſus, Meſſiah; therefore was ſhe given up to deſtruction by cruel enemies. And not many years after the date of this epiſtle, was the ſentence executed by the vindictive Romans.

Nor could the Jews juſtly complain that God had ſo long ſpared them when they deſerved puniſhment—received them often to mercy when they merited to be cut off for their idolatries and wickedneſs—and, at the laſt, that he ſhould viſit their iniquities, and the iniquities of their forefathers, ſo ſeverely upon them, rejecting them from the promiſes made to Abraham, and calling in the Gentiles to ſupply their place in his covenant, and giving their city and nation up to utter ruin and exciſion.

If God ſpared them when they deſerved puniſhment; if he received them to mercy when they merited exciſion; it only proves that God is gracious, and merciful, long-ſuffering, and ſlow to anger. If he viſited the iniquities of their fathers upon them, it was becauſe they continued in, and repeated, and would not repent of thoſe iniquities. As God preſerved Pharaoh, ſo he preſerved them, till their puniſhment would moſt conduce to his glory, and the benefit of the rational world, by

making them an illuſtrious example of his juſtice and power, who would not be reclaimed by his mercy and goodneſs.

To this principle the conduct of God is referred in the twenty-ſecond verſe of this chapter: "What if God, willing to ſhow his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much long-ſuffering, the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction?"

The only objection that could be made to what the Apoſtle had ſaid, that God "will have mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth," muſt be drawn from the abſolute power and arbitrary will of God. If God hardened Pharaoh and the impenitent Jews, and reſerved them for puniſhment, why doth he yet find fault with them for their diſobedience? They could not reſiſt his will, nor prevent their being hardened if *he would* harden them; nor, when they were hardened by him, could they repent, and become obedient to him.

The objection is founded on falſe ground—on a ſuppoſition that God hardeneth men, and maketh them ſinners, and then conſigneth them to puniſhment from mere will and caprice. But who ever entertained this opinion of God? Mercy and juſtice, goodneſs and truth, mark all his dealings with men. "Is there unrighteouſneſs with God?" Who can charge him with injuſtice, or diſpute the equity of his ways? Not his arbitrary will, but the iniquity of ſinners, occaſions the hardneſs of their hearts. Not his good pleaſure, but their impenitency, conſigns them to puniſhment. God

made all for ſome uſe, to anſwer good purpoſes in the creation—ſome for purpoſes more honourable than others, yet all for purpoſes neceſſary and uſeful. A potter hath power over his clay, to make of the ſame parcel, one veſſel to an honourable, and another to a diſhonourable uſe; yet both for uſes equally neceſſary. Or, if the clay prove not good enough to make a veſſel unto honour, he can make a ſecond attempt, and form another veſſel for which the materials are more proper.

So Pharaoh and the obdurate Jews, no longer anſwering the purpoſe of God in their creation, by ſhowing his mercy and goodneſs by their faith and obedience, became hardened againſt all the motions of his ſpirit, not by the arbitrary will of God, but by their own wicked perverſeneſs: they were, therefore, like clay marred in the hand of the potter, (Jer. xviii. 4.) converted to another uſe—to diſplay to the world the power, and juſtice, and majeſty of God Moſt High, in the tremendous judgments which he inflicted on them.

To make known the wrath and power of God againſt impenitent ſinners—the veſſels of wrath—who, under the goodneſs and long-ſuffering of God, have, by their own perverſeneſs, been fitted or made ready for puniſhment, may be a leſs honourable purpoſe, than to "make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he had afore," by his holy ſpirit, "prepared unto glory:" but, conſidering God, as he is repreſented to us in the holy ſcriptures, not only as the Creator, but as the moral Governor of the world, it becomes not only

uſeful, but neceſſary, that his juſtice, as well as mercy, ſhould be known unto men: otherwiſe his character as moral Governor muſt ceaſe; for a Governor who is all mercy, and cannot or will not puniſh a delinquent who continues obſtinate in his diſobedience, ought to be called by ſome other name.

The great difficulty in this matter ſeems to ariſe from prejudice and prepoſſeſſion in favour of Calvin's ſcheme of predeſtination; by which he means a decree of election and reprobation, paſſed by God from eternity, reſpecting the preſent conduct and future ſtate of every perſon born into the world. Calvin was undoubtedly a man of abilities, and his whole conduct ſhows that he was a man of an aſſuming, intrepid, and vindictive temper. He buſied himſelf in every thing which concerned the reformation, and with every body who had any influence in it. At laſt he fixed himſelf at the head of the Proteſtants, and became their Pope. Little was done; little was taught but as Calvin liked and adviſed.

Predeſtination had been fixed in the church of Rome by St. Auſtin. Calvin made him his maſter in divinity, and carried his ſcheme to its utmoſt extent. Unhappily, there are faſhions in divinity as well as in philoſophy; and, on the authority of Calvin, the corruption of the chriſtian doctrine which the church of Rome had made in the matter of predeſtination, became faſhionable among the reformers. All minds were tinctured with it; nor did the tranſlators of the Bible into Engliſh eſcape the infection; but, under its influence, gave

a Calviniſtic turn to very many expreſſions in it. Theſe expreſſions are, indeed, oftentimes ſoftened or corrected by the margin, which is generally the better tranſlation. But all our Bibles have not the marginal reading; nor will all readers attend to the margin when they have it. By this mean, predeſtinarianiſm, having taken deep root, is not likely to be ſoon, or entirely rooted out.

All objects are ſaid to appear yellow to the jaundiced eye. Predeſtination is to the mind what the jaundice is to the body. The whole Bible appears tinctured with a ſickly, yellow hue, when the predeſtinarian looks into it, eſpecially if he be of a moroſe and vindictive temper, as moſt commonly is the caſe. To ſee God conſigning the greater part of mankind to eternal miſery, in conſequence of his own arbitrary decree, juſt to ſhow that he can do it, and will do it—for the glory of his *juſtice*, as they call it—ſeems to be congenial and grateful to his heart: and, in truth, the conſequences of this doctrine, carried to its full extent, however the abettors of it may not own or ſee them, repreſent Almighty God, the God of goodneſs and love, to whom be glory forever, in a more unamiable light than it is poſſible for human wit to repreſent the devil.

It will, I truſt, appear to every reaſonable mind, that nothing ſaid of Pharaoh, or of the impenitent Jews, hath relation to predeſtination; but, that every thing which happened to them was the conſequence of their own wicked and obſtinate diſpoſition. God indeed ſaw this diſpoſition, and

ſpoke of it, and declared what its conſequences would be. But no inference can be drawn from thence in favour of predeſtination: nor to juſtify thoſe people who, when they live wickedly, or fall into particular ſins, pretend that they were predeſtinated, or fore-ordained to do ſo—that they are poor weak creatures, and that God left them to themſelves, and they could not help it.

Such pleas are directly againſt eſtabliſhed and undoubted truths; eſtabliſhed both by the nature of God and the plain declarations of his word. God delighteth not in the deſtruction of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould be converted and live. He will not, therefore, predeſtinate any perſons to the commiſſion of ſin, nor pre-ordain any ſins to be committed by them: that would be to predeſtinate them to deſtruction, contrary to his own good pleaſure. Again;

God is not only deſcribed as abounding in love and goodneſs to us, but alſo as being our only ſupport and ſtrength; the author and giver of all the abilities of body and mind which we poſſeſs; the fountain of grace and goodneſs in us, without whom we can do nothing that is pleaſing to him. He will not, therefore, withdraw from us that grace and ſtrength, without which we can do nothing that is good; that holy ſpirit, without whoſe inſpiration we cannot have a good thought, working any good deſign to effect. To leave us to ourſelves, would counteract the goodneſs of his intentions, the deſigns of his love towards us; and would make us as ſure a prey to the ſtrength of tempta-

tions, as if an eternal decree of reprobation had paſſed againſt us.

That God leaves no man to himſelf, by withdrawing his holy ſpirit from him, unleſs the man firſt leave God, by ſinning wilfully and impenitently againſt him, till the impreſſions of goodneſs are deſtroyed, and his grace hath no further effect on him, is a maxim, I ſuppoſe, acknowledged by all ſober divines, and ought to be adopted by all chriſtian people.

Did men look more to the corruption of their hearts; to the ſtrength of the paſſions and luſts which they inherit from their fallen nature; to the force of temptations which daily aſſault them; to the little care they take to obey God by doing his will; to their neglect of prayer for the gift of the holy ſpirit; to their diſregard of the public worſhip and ſacraments of the church, the means and inſtruments of God's grace and bleſſing; to their utter contempt of chriſtian ſelf-denial, mortification, and faſting; to the full ſcope they give to all worldly, ſelfiſh, and pleaſurable deſires; they would find a moſt ſure ſource of all their wickedneſs and impenitency: They need not charge them to the all-gracious, all-righteous God of heaven and earth.

DISCOURSE III.

THE DOOM OF JERUSALEM.

A Diſcourſe on

LUKE XIX. 41, 42. *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

WE have conſidered the hiſtory of Pharaoh, particularly what is meant by God's hardening his heart. We have adverted to the fate of the Iſraelites who were delivered from Egypt, and afterward periſhed in the wilderneſs. We have attended to the conduct and puniſhment of the latter Jews in the time of Chriſt; and have explained the meaning of that text which ſaith, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

It may be worth our while to conſider whether theſe things concern Chriſtians. If God dealt with Pharaoh and the Jews in ſuch a manner as he never did, and never will deal with others, we have little

or nothing to do with them, further than curioſity and amuſement are concerned. But, if he intended them as warnings and admonitions to us, as examples of the fatal iſſue of their conduct, and an exemplification of a fixed rule of his dealing with them and with all mankind, we ſhall find ourſelves moſt deeply intereſted in whatever related to them. Under the full perſuaſion that we are ſo, I take the liberty to bring before you the particular caſe of the Jews, and the final ſentence which Chriſt paſſed upon their capital city, Jeruſalem, in the words of the Text; hoping that your candour will excuſe the repetition of ſentiments and circumſtances that have been before mentioned, or briefly conſidered.

It is apparent that God dealt with his old people, the church of the Jews, by the ſame rule by which he dealt with Pharaoh. And, as he is no reſpecter of perſons, but "will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hardeneth whom he will;" that is, diſpenſeth the bleſſings of his grace and mercy, or executeth his judgments, according to his own good pleaſure; rendering to every man according to his deeds, and agreeably to the ſtate he hath formed for himſelf: What good reaſon can be given, why he ſhould not deal with Chriſtians as he dealt with Pharaoh and the Jews, if, as Pharaoh and the Jews did, they harden the heart againſt him, and paſs their day of grace in obſtinate and final impenitency?

Chriſtians profeſs to believe, that the Bible contains the hiſtory of God's revelation to the world;

making known his will, and directing the conduct of men: that it ſets forth the hiſtory of many things he hath done in the world to particular nations of men, relative to their conduct compared with his will made known to them; ſo that, ſeeing the bleſſings and judgments his hand hath diſpenſed to others, they may be induced to live in obedience to him who is the author of life, and the giver of every good thing to his creatures: this is their profeſſion; but, unhappily, their practice correſponds but ill with it.

In reſpect of holy ſcripture, Chriſtians ſeem to have fallen into a ſtate very ſimilar to that of the Jews in the time of Chriſt. The Jews believed that the books of the Old Teſtament contained the revelation of God's will, and were ready, at all times, to diſpute about them and for them; to ſettle philoſophic and ſpeculative opinions by them; to interpret the dark prophecies, and explain the deep myſteries contained in them: and ſo high did they carry their veneration of them, that, leſt they ſhould be corrupted, they numbered and carefully noted the ſum of the words and letters in which they were written. But to make them the rule of their life, and regulate their conduct by that will of God which they declared, was a matter with which, a few inſtances excepted, they had little to do.

The example of Pharaoh, exhibited to us by God's hardening his heart, by the miracles he wrought for his conviction, and by withdrawing from him his holy ſpirit, becauſe he would not ſuffer his di-

vine motions and inſpirations to take any laſting hold of him; by his pronouncing againſt him the ſentence of reprobation, and giving him up to deſtruction, the Jews perverted, ſo as to make it of no efficacy to bring them to repentance, but rather to increaſe their own pride, and harden their hearts in iniquity. For,

Who was Pharaoh? who were the Egyptians that periſhed with him? Vile heathen, and the objects of God's hatred and wrath. But themſelves they believed to be the peculiar people of God —the children of Abraham by Sarah, and the ſole heirs of all the bleſſings of the covenant made with him. If God corrected them for their tranſgreſſions, his corrections were but the chaſtiſements of a father. He never would puniſh them as he did wicked heathen, with blindneſs of mind and hardneſs of heart; nor iſſue the ſentence of reprobation and deſtruction againſt them.

Nor had the judgments of God upon the Iſraelites whom he brought through the Red Sea, when Pharaoh and his army were drowned, any greater effect on them. They conſidered not that thoſe Iſraelites were the covenanted people of God equally with themſelves, being the children of Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, and heirs of all the promiſes made to them, particularly of the inheritance of Canaan, whither God was then conducting them: that they had, moreover, perſonally entered into covenant with God at Horeb, and had been eye-witneſſes of all the great things he had done for them, in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wil-

derneſs: that, on account of their diſbelief and diſtruſt of the power of God to put them in poſſeſſion of Canaan, occaſioned by the report which the ſpies, whom Moſes had ſent to view the country, made of the ſize and ſtrength of the inhabitants, "God ſware in his wrath," that not one of thoſe who were numbered when they came out of Egypt, Caleb and Joſhua excepted, ſhould obtain that promiſe, but ſhould all die in the wilderneſs; condemning them to forty years wandering in it, till that curſe of reprobation ſhould be fulfilled on them. Nor had the goodneſs of God any effect on them, ſo as to correct the perverſity of their heart. Like Pharaoh, they cloſed their eyes againſt his miracles, and regarded not the interpoſitions of his providence in their favour, till neither miracles nor providential interpoſitions could do them any good. At Marah they complained of the bitterneſs of the water, and were relieved from their diſtreſs by the goodneſs of God, who directed Moſes to caſt the bough of a certain tree into it, and the water became ſweet. Shortly after they murmured in the wilderneſs of Sin, and demanded bread and fleſh for their hunger. Again the power of God relieved them by a miraculous ſupply of quails and manna. It was not long before they repeated their murmurings for water at Rephidim; and ſo violent were their clamours, that Moſes thought himſelf in danger of being ſtoned by them. The rock in Horeb, ſmitten by the rod of Moſes, in obedience to the direction of God, ſupplied them with water to ſatiety.

Thus they went on during their abode in the wilderneſs, ever complaining, never ſatisfied: and though always relieved from diſtreſs by the power of God, yet ſtill doubting that power: ſtill doubting whether God was with them, though they ſaw daily manifeſtations of his preſence, and had beheld his glory viſibly diſplayed on mount Sinai—wiſhing they had died by the hand of God, with full ſtomachs, in Egypt, rather than to be left to famiſh in the wilderneſs.

God ſaw the irreclaimable hardneſs and baſeneſs of their tempers, and he ſware in his wrath that they ſhould not enter into Canaan. Their profeſſions of penitence and ſubmiſſion were ineffectual. Their doom was paſt, and it was literally fulfilled: they all died wandering in the wilderneſs.

Surpriſing as it may appear, theſe inſtances of the unbelief and rebellion of the Iſraelites, and of the judgments of God on them, in conſequence thereof, never ſeem to have ceaſed while they continued a nation; nor in their preſent diſperſed ſtate through the world do they appear to be cured of them. In the time of Chriſt, they went on in the ſame way with their forefathers, acting from the ſame temper and diſpoſition of heart, till the wrath of God broke on them, in the final deſtruction of their civil and religious polity, by the power of the Romans.

Of that terrible and fatal diſaſter, the goodneſs of God had given them long and repeated notice. The old prophets had foretold the event, and called them to repentance, as the only method to eſcape

the vengeance of God: but their predictions they regarded not. The holy Baptiſt, who, in the power, and ſpirit, and with the mortification of Elias, came to prepare the way of the Lord, by turning the hearts of the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt, preached to them the doctrine and baptiſm of repentance. He declared that the axe was about to be laid to the root of the trees, and that every tree growing in the garden of God, the church of the Jews, which brought not forth good fruit, ſhould be hewn down, and caſt into the fire: that God, the great huſbandman of the earth, the eſpecial owner and proprietor of that people, had taken his winnowing fan in his hand, and would effectually clear and cleanſe his threſhing-floor, by ſeparating the chaff from the wheat; the latter he would gather into his granary, but would burn up the former with fire which none could quench. "Repent," therefore, ſaid he, that ye may eſcape the judgment of God impending over the wicked; "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" the promiſed reign of Meſſiah is now commencing.—They believed not John, but reviled him as a madman poſſeſſed of the devil.

The laſt proffer of mercy was the preaching of Meſſiah. All meek and lowly, "he came unto his own" people, theſe hard-hearted and impenitent Jews: they "received him not." He called them to repentance: they would not repent. He proclaimed the kingdom of God: they refuſed to enter into it. He declared himſelf to be ſent of God, to open the eyes of the blind, to heal the

broken and contrite ſpirit, to releaſe the captives of ſatan, to preach good news of ſalvation to the meek and humble, to make known the acceptable year of the Lord: they attempted to throw him down a precipice for his preſumption. He wrought miracles to prove his divine miſſion: they aſcribed his miracles to the power of the devil. He lived not on particular food, like John the Baptiſt, but ate and drank the food of other people: they blaſphemed him as a glutton and a drunkard. In ſtrong alluſions and apt parables, he warned them of the impending rejection of God: they contrived his death.

In this ſtate of obdurate impenitency were the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, when Jeſus, for the laſt time, approached it. The proſpect of the city, the knowledge of what it was to endure, filled his eyes with tears, his heart with ſorrow, his mouth with the moſt plaintive words of commiſeration: "O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," and thou wouldſt not! "If thou," Jeruſalem, "hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." And "behold your houſe is left unto you deſolate. For I ſay unto you, ye ſhall not ſee me henceforth."

But no warning had any effect. The declaration of Jeſus excited their malice; the acclamations and

hosannas of the multitude inflamed their passions. They seized him as a malefactor, and crucified him by the hand of the Romans. The little flock of chosen disciples and followers whom he left in the world, they persecuted and murdered, or scattered abroad among the nations, because they declared his resurrection, and preached repentance, remission of sins, and eternal life in his name.

Thus they continued provoking God, and increasing the heavy load of their guilt, till the Roman army, the terrible scourge of God, cast a trench about Jerusalem, and compassed her round, and kept her in on every side, and laid her even with the ground, and her children within her, not leaving one stone upon another; because she knew not the time of her visitation. For had she known, even at the last, in the days of Christ, the things that belonged to her peace; had she then repented of her wickedness, and reformed her manners; had she been convinced by the miracles of Christ, that he was Messiah, the glory of Israel, the light of the Gentiles, the Son of God, the things of peace had still been hers. But,

Against all the admonitions of God she hardened her heart; against the miracles of Christ she shut her eyes; against his preaching she closed her ears. Perfectly similar to the temper and conduct of Pharaoh, and the Israelites in the wilderness, was the temper and conduct of the Jews when Jesus preached among them; and by the same rule did God deal with them, which had directed his treatment of Pharaoh and those Israelites. When nei-

ther his providence, nor his miraculous works, nor the motions of his spirit, could do them good, the things which made for their happiness were hidden from them. God gave them up, and their own vain imaginations and reprobate minds took full possession of them. Forsaken of God, and under the direction of so bad guides, they grew more hardened in iniquity, and acted as foolishly, as rashly, as madly, as ever did Pharaoh or the old Israelites. Their end, too, was the same—total destruction from the power of God, executed by his ministers, the Roman army.

It is worth our consideration, whether such a state can possibly be ours, or whether we have some certain security against it. If we advert to the nature of God, it is always the same. He changeth not. He neither is now, nor ever was, any respecter of persons. Human nature, too, is the same it ever was; as weak, and perverse, and obstinate; as liable to error, and wickedness, and hardness of heart, as it was in the days of Pharaoh, or of the Jews. Against the weakness and wickedness of nature we have no security from ourselves: it can only come from God—from the inspirations and strength of his spirit. This spirit is not at our command; it is his gift. To our prayers for it, and compliance with its holy motions, God hath promised to give and continue it to us. It, therefore, becomes our duty humbly to ask it of God, and obediently to follow its holy inspirations. All desires and tendencies to that which is good are from this spirit. If we turn from them, and re-

ſiſt them, diſregard the commands and prohibitions of God, and follow the dictates of our own will, we tread in the ſteps of reprobate Pharaoh, of the Iſraelites and Jews. In that road we may arrive at a ſtate of wickedneſs and hardneſs of heart equal with theirs. If we ſhould, what ſhall hinder the ſentence of reprobation from paſſing againſt us, as it did againſt them, and leaving us to fill up the meaſure of our iniquity, and periſh miſerably, as they did?

Writing to the Hebrew Chriſtians, St. Paul brings the example of their fathers in the wilderneſs to their recollection. They tempted and provoked God, and he ſwore in his wrath, "they ſhall not enter into my reſt." "Take heed, brethren," ſaith he, "leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

There is, then, in the eſtimation of the Apoſtle, both poſſibility and danger of Chriſtians falling, through unbelief, under the ſame ſentence of reprobation with the unbelieving and hardened Iſraelites, whom God diſinherited of the land of Canaan, and ſentenced their carcaſes to fall in the wilderneſs. (Num. xiv. 12, 29.) And the way which the Apoſtle points out to avoid ſo miſerable a ſtate is, "To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For ſome, when they had heard, did provoke." (Heb. iii. 11, 12, 15, 16.)

The voice of God now ſpeaks to us by his providence, by his word, by his miniſters, by his church, by the inſpirations of his holy ſpirit, who

putteth into our hearts good deſires, and excites and ſtrengthens us to bring them to good effect. If we ſtifle the voice of God ſpeaking to us and in us, we do juſt what the Iſraelites did—we harden the heart againſt him.

From comparing together the conduct and declaration of Chriſt, it will appear, that he moſt earneſtly deſired the converſion of the Jews, even when he pronounced the doom of Jeruſalem. The ſimilitude he uſeth, drawn from the affection of the hen to her chickens, and the tears which he ſhed, are proofs too ſtrong to be doubted. And that Jeruſalem might ſavingly have known and done the things which belonged to her peace, in the days of the viſitation of Meſſiah, is moſt certain. It is alſo clear, that ſhe could thereby have eſcaped the judgments that were hanging over her, on account of her infidelity and wickedneſs. Otherwiſe the tears of the bleſſed Jeſus could not have been the tears of commiſeration and love.

No eternal decree of reprobation had, therefore, been paſſed againſt her. If there had, Chriſt's wiſhing that ſhe had known the things of her peace, would have been contrary to the will and decree of the Father, which is impoſſible: the will of the Father and of Chriſt being always one and the ſame. God the Father had, therefore, the ſame affection for Jeruſalem—the ſame earneſt deſire of the converſion and return of the Jews to him, which Chriſt had. He had laid no bar in the way of their happineſs. Nor is there any intimation that either their wickedneſs or their deſtruction was in

consequence of any eternal decree of God: and what does not appear can be no rule for our judgment or practice.

They might have been sheltered under the divine protection, as the hen shelters her brood under her wings, but they would not. They might have seen the things which belonged to their peace, but they would not. They might have repented at the admonitions and calls of God: they might have regarded the providence, and grace, and miracles of God; but their obdurate hearts were made insensible by long-continued habits of sin, and they would not. The sentence of reprobation then passed on them, and they were given up to vanity and destruction.

Whether Christians who suppose an eternal decree of reprobation from God against Pharaoh, the old Israelites, and the Jews in the time of Christ's ministry; by which they were predispos'd to wickedness, and their hearts hardened in iniquity, that they might become fit objects of punishment to display the justice of God to the world; do not run into an error which will preclude these examples from being of any use, may be left to the determination of every reasonable man. For if a person is reprobated from eternity, neither these examples, nor any thing else, can do him good against the decree of God: and if he be not so reprobated, the examples of Pharoah, the Israelites, and Jews, if we suppose them to have acted under such a decree of eternal reprobation, are utterly inapplicable to him.

"Whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." The inſtances of God's goodneſs, and mercy, and long-ſuffering, which he hath cauſed to be recorded, are intended to teach us repentance and faith, and reliance upon him. The inſtances of his juſtice and judgments againſt wicked perſons and nations, are deſigned to ſhew us the danger of ſin, and impenitency, and unbelief; that, encouraged by his promiſes, and the great things he hath done for his ſervants, and deterred by his threats, and the ſevere puniſhments he hath inflicted on impenitent ſinners, we might be kept in faithful obedience to his will, and in humble penitence for all our ſins and errors; and, finally, by his mercy, be received, through Jeſus Chriſt, to eternal felicity in the future world.

DISCOURSE IV.

PART THE FIRST.

OBSERVATIONS ON DAVID's NUMBERING THE PEOPLE.

2 SAM. XXIV. 1. *And again the anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Iſrael, and he moved David againſt them, to ſay, Go number Iſrael and Judah.*

HE who readeth hiſtory for the ſake of the ſtory only, will probably profit but little. The cauſes of events, the circumſtances which attended them, the conſequences which followed from them, muſt all be regarded and conſidered with candour and attention, or we ſhall gain no inſtruction for our own conduct, but only fill our heads with the vain knowledge of facts of no ſignificancy or importance to us.

The natural tempers and paſſions of men are the ſame in all countries, and have been ſo in all ages. The only difference that can ariſe muſt be in the manner of their exertion: and though, in this re-

ſpect, education and the habit of the country may cauſe ſome variety, yet, under ſimilar circumſtances, their effects will be nearly the ſame. Hiſtory, therefore, if we duly regard it, and compare our own ſituation with it, will give us the moſt uſeful leſſons to regulate our own conduct. By pointing out the errors and vices of other ages and countries, and the misfortunes which were conſequent on them, we ſhall be taught the neceſſity of avoiding their crimes, if we would eſcape their diſaſters. By bringing their virtues to open view, and diſplaying the proſperity of which they were productive, we ſhall be inſtigated to imitate their virtues, that we may partake of their felicity.

For, whatever may be the ſentiments of worldly wiſdom, or the dictates of perverted reaſon, virtue and vice will have contrary effects, and produce contrary ſtates: happineſs, eſpecially in a national view, will attend the former as its natural companion; while diſappointments and misfortunes, wretchedneſs and miſery, will be the never-failing conſequences of the latter. This is the order of our nature; nor hath human policy ever been able to counteract it, or make a vicious nation long proſperous.

If this be the uſe of hiſtory in general, more eſpecially muſt it be ſo of thoſe hiſtorical accounts of particular nations and men which are recorded in the Bible. No good reaſon can be given why God hath cauſed them to be written, but that they might ſerve as examples to us of his dealing with men, according as they obey or tranſgreſs his laws

which mark the diſtinction between virtue and vice; and to convince us, by ſenſible facts, that virtue, that is, obedience to him, will be rewarded with his approbation and bleſſing; while vice and immorality perpetually bring his chaſtiſements on thoſe who live impenitently in them.

For the dealings of God with particular nations and men, as they are recorded in the Bible, are not to be conſidered as relative to them only, but as inſtances of the rule of God's dealing with the whole world of mankind. As he dealt with them, ſo will he deal with us, and with all others. His infinite knowledge and wiſdom can ſee and diſtinguiſh the variations of their ſituation from ours; and his juſtice, which nothing can evade or corrupt, can exactly proportion his bleſſings or judgments to that variation. As none can eſcape the obſervation of his all-ſeeing eye, ſo none can eſcape the retributions of his righteous and unerring providence.

The hiſtories of the Bible deſerve alſo our regard on another account, of the higheſt importance to us. Human hiſtories often give partial and intereſted accounts of facts, conjectural and wrong cauſes of events: they pervert or falſely repreſent the conſequences of particular tranſactions, as infirmity, or ignorance, or party motives ſhall direct.

But the hiſtories of the Bible are not human, but divine compoſitions: they are intended for our admonition and inſtruction, and were written by men inſpired by the ſpirit of God. Truth muſt, therefore, be their characteriſtic. No wrong cauſes, or partial repreſentations of events, or of their ef-

fects, can reaſonably be apprehended, or charged on them, without arraigning the knowledge and veracity of God.

Not only the good qualities and actions of men eminent for their ſanctity, but their miſtakes, and errors, and wilful tranſgreſſions of God's law, are regiſtered; that being, by them, made ſenſible of the weakneſſes of human nature, and of the corruption and deceit of our own hearts, we might not be tempted to rely ſolely on our own ſtrength, or truſt to our own reaſon and judgment to guard us againſt ſin, but to his grace and holy ſpirit who made us, and who muſt forever be the ſource of all holineſs in us, as well as the ſtrength of our life and the rock of our ſalvation.

The repentance, too, of ſome renowned ſervants of God, when they had fallen deep into ſin, by great and wilful tranſgreſſions, is noted, and the gracious pardon of God conſequent on their repentance, is pointed out, to encourage us to return by repentance to our duty, when it is our unhappineſs to ſin againſt our heavenly Benefactor.

The Bible, alſo, lays before us inſtances of national repentance and reformation of manners, and of their efficacy to avert the judgments of God impending over communities of wicked people.

To theſe may be added the remiſſion, or ſuſpenſion of puniſhment, upon the appearance or profeſſion of repentance, which the Bible exhibits, even when thoſe profeſſions did not prove to be ſincere, but only the effects of preſent apprehenſion of threatened judgments; to convince us that there

is mercy with God for the penitent offender; that he is more ready to pardon, than we to repent; to ſuſpend, or lay by the execution of his vengeance, when the purpoſes of his goodneſs can any otherwiſe be accompliſhed, than we are to aſk ſo great a mercy of him.

With theſe ſentiments let us attend to the hiſtory which the text introduceth to our notice—David's numbering the people of Iſrael. The hiſtory is a remarkable one, and full of intereſting circumſtances and events. To draw ſuch obſervations and inferences from it, as may tend to ſet the tranſaction in its true light, and, at the ſame time, direct our judgments, regulate our opinions, and form our practice into the habits of humble dependence on God, and abſolute ſubmiſſion to his will, muſt be highly beneficial to us.

Weakneſs, and ignorance, and error are the ſtate of our nature, and, by our own abilities, never can be remedied. On the ſtrength, and judgment, and will of our all-gracious Creator, we may rely with full confidence: they are infinite, and therefore perfect. They are in union with infinite wiſdom, and goodneſs, and truth: they, therefore, cannot lead us into error, or folly, or any thing that can hurt us.

The hiſtory begins with informing us, that "the anger of the Lord was again kindled againſt Iſrael, and he moved David againſt them, to ſay, Go number Iſrael and Judah."

From comparing this account with the account of the ſame tranſaction in 1 Chron. xxi. we find a

remarkable difference in two particulars; one respecting the person who moved David to have the people numbered, the other respecting their number delivered in by Joab, to whom, as being the commander of the army, the management of this business had been principally committed.

In the text it is said, *the Lord moved David* to this deed. In 1 Chron. xxi. satan is said to have excited him to it. In Samuel, the verb *moved* hath no nominative before it. Our translators have made *the Lord* the antecedent to the pronoun *he*, and to be the mover of David; and have, in the margin, put *satan*, probably because he is mentioned in Chronicles. By this mean they have left the matter doubtful, whether the *Lord* or *satan* excited David to this offensive purpose. The proper rendering, *and David was moved*, without specifying by whom, would have avoided so unseemly a difficulty. Nor would it have been discordant from the meaning of the expression in the Chronicles, where satan is said to have moved him.

The Hebrew word *satan* means an evil accuser, a wicked seducer, a malicious enemy, and does not always signify the *devil*, or prince of darkness; except in a general or remote sense, as he is the author of all evil, and the perpetual instigator to the commission of sin, being the enemy of God, and of all goodness.

We have the authority of an Apostle to say, that as "God cannot be tempted with evil," so "neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust,"

his perverſe and corrupt will, "and enticed." That this was David's caſe, many circumſtances in this hiſtory render it more than probable. Of this evil diſpoſition, ſatan, the adverſary of goodneſs, availed himſelf, and urged him on to the full perpetration of his vain-glorious and fooliſh project.

Perverſity of will is generally attended with obſtinacy; and ſo intent was David on this ill-judged buſineſs, that the remonſtrances of Joab, and the generals of the army, could not divert him from it.

How Joab, a man of no ſcrupulous conſcience, and who did not uſe to give up his views, becauſe baſe and foul actions were neceſſary to accompliſh them, came to ſee and be alarmed at evil conſequences in this matter, which had eſcaped the obſervation of David, no direct account can be given. We know, however, that when the mind is ſtrongly ſet on any matter, it is apt to overlook all circumſtances, and diſregard all conſequences which may interfere with the accompliſhment of its purpoſe. Though of a religious and devout temper, and, in the general courſe of his life, anxiouſly ſolicitous to ſtudy and fulfil the law of God, to live in deep humility before him, and in abſolute dependence on him, David, in this caſe, ſaw not the pride, and arrogance, and departure from his confidence in God, which lurked at the bottom of the buſineſs.

Whether Joab conſidered it in a religious or in a political view, it was diſagreeable to him, and to the principal officers of the army. In terms leſs haughty than he had been accuſtomed to uſe to his king, he remonſtrated againſt the meaſure;

but he remonſtrated in vain: "Why doth my Lord require this thing? why will he be a cauſe of treſpaſs to Iſrael?" The king's word, however, prevailed, and Joab and his aſſociates were obliged to ſet out to execute his command.

It is probable this buſineſs had been debated in council; and that ſome evil adviſer, having gained an aſcendency over David, to flatter his vanity, and ingratiate himſelf with him as a friend of his power and grandeur, had put him on this wild ſcheme, and carried it into effect, againſt the more prudent opinion of Joab. This evil counſellor, whoever he may have been, was that *ſatan*, or adverſary who moved David againſt Iſrael; and he got that name from the fatal effects of the advice he then gave.

The other difference which we find between the books of Samuel and Chronicles, reſpecting this tranſaction, is in the numbers delivered in by David's officers. In Samuel the whole ſum is one million and three hundred thouſand; in Chronicles it is one million five hundred and ſeventy thouſand. The difference is two hundred and ſeventy thouſand. To account for this difference, the Jewiſh authors ſay, that the ſtanding forces of the kingdom, conſiſting of twelve courſes of twenty-four thouſand each, making together two hundred and eighty-eight thouſand men, are reckoned in Chronicles, but not in Samuel.

This ſolution ſtill leaves a difference of eighteen thouſand. It is, however, not uncommon in the Bible, to uſe round numbers to expreſs large ſums,

if they come near the truth, without regarding minute preciſion.

If this ſolution be not deemed ſatisfactory, I know of no other but the ſuppoſition, that the perſon who, after the return of the Jews from the Babyloniſh captivity, tranſcribed the Chronicles, committed ſome miſtake in the numeral letters. What makes this conjecture the more probable, and that the number in the book of Samuel is the preferable reading, is, that the number in Chronicles ſeems rather extravagant if compared with the extent of the country, and the perſons who were the objects of the king's command.

The country, by the beſt accounts, was not more than one hundred and eighty miles in length, and about ninety in breadth. If the people who were unfit to bear arms were to be counted, no good reaſon can be given why Joab and the generals of the army were ſent on this buſineſs. We are, beſides, expreſſly told that the tribes of Levi and Benjamin were not numbered.

Under theſe circumſtances, it is not probable that Joab's return ſhould have exceeded thirteen hundred thouſand men. Even this number will make the inhabitants of the country to have been ſeven millions of people; full enough for the extent of it, even though it was very fertile, and fully cultivated.

To determine preciſely in what the crime of numbering the people conſiſted, hath given much trouble to commentators.

Some have ſuppoſed that it lay in the omiſſion

of collecting the half ſhekel which the law directed every man to pay on ſuch occaſions, but which was now forgotten by David. But it ſeems improbable that a perſon ſo well verſed in the law, and whoſe general life had been devoted to religion and piety, ſhould have been ignorant of this circumſtance, or have careleſſly neglected it, had the law required it. It is alſo ſtrange that there ſhould have been no perſon of knowledge or piety enough to have given him proper information in this matter.

But, in truth, it does not appear that this half ſhekel was to be demanded, except when the people were numbered on a religious account, to make proviſion for the ſervice of God, in building or repairing the tabernacle or temple. (Exod. xxx. 13—16.)

Others have ſuppoſed that David ſhowed an evil heart of unbelief, reſpecting the promiſe of God to Abraham, that he would multiply his offſpring till it became like the ſtars of heaven, and like the ſand of the ſea-ſhore—ſo great that it could not be numbered. But it ſhould be remembered, that out of regard to this very promiſe, David attempted not to take the number of the Iſraelites who were under twenty years old; "becauſe the Lord had ſaid, he would increaſe Iſrael like to the ſtars of heaven." (1. Chron. xxvii. 23.)

The pride and vanity of a heart corrupted by power and wealth ſeem to have excited David to the fooliſh and vain-glorious project of knowing the

full extent of his military ſtrength—how many armed men he could bring into the field.

His army, indeed, was his principal dependence, if he was to look for ſupport and ſecurity only to an armed force. This appears from his being obliged to give up the attempt of removing Joab from his poſt of chief commander of it, leſt the affection of the ſoldiers for the man, and their attachment to his military character, ſhould have occaſioned freſh internal commotions, or have diſſolved the whole frame of his government.

Yet I call this project of numbering the people a fooliſh one, becauſe he had no enemy to contend with: the whole country, from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, was in quiet ſubjection to him: and nothing was ſo likely to excite the jealouſy of his neighbours, as ſeeing him purſue meaſures which indicated ſome military expedition.

I call it vain-glorious, becauſe it was uſeleſs in itſelf, and injurious to his people, by putting them to great and needleſs expenſe, by ſinking them deeper in irreligion and diſregard of God, leſſening their dependence on him, and leading them to place it on the warlike character of their king, and the number of his forces.

To form ſome good judgment of the expenſe and trouble to which the people were put, let it be remembered, that when Joab and the other generals went out to number the people, "they paſſed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer." This ſeems to imply that they there encamped, and called the people to them from the neighbouring cities and

country: and this, probably, was their practice through their whole progress; namely, to fix on some convenient station, where they could be well accommodated, and there assemble the people about them.

The people were to bear the expense of travelling, and the loss of their time and labour. Many would come together with them through idleness and the lust of curiosity, and the scene would generally end in dissipation, riot, and debauchery. And, indeed, we learn from the book of Chronicles, that Joab grew tired of the business, either from the expense and trouble which attended it, or from the scenes of confusion which ensued—"the king's word was abominable unto him," and he left off to execute it, before he had numbered either Levi or Benjamin.

To make a true estimate of David's crime, we must recollect that God had raised him from a private station, to be the head and king of his people: That he had preserved him in many difficulties, and delivered him from dangers in which human help could have been of no avail: That he had given the neighbouring nations into his hand, and made him the most victorious and renowned monarch of his time.

God had also been very gracious to his better part, his immortal soul. He had given him an ingenuous, strong, and religious mind; had endued him with many and extraordinary gifts of his holy spirit; had established him to be a prophet,

and made him an eminent type of Meſſiah, the Redeemer of the world.

Nor had David been always inſenſible of the goodneſs and grace of God to him, nor unmindful of his power to ſave by many or by few, and to give the victory to whom he pleaſed. Many devout expreſſions of this kind occur in his Pſalms; many ardent thankſgivings and praiſes to God, for his marvellous goodneſs, and for the aſtoniſhing deliverance he had granted him. "I will not," ſaith he, "truſt in my bow; it is not my ſword that ſhall help me; but it is thou that ſaveſt us from our enemies, and putteſt them to confuſion that hate us." And, with regard to his ſpiritual ſtate, he ſaith, "O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my ſoul."

And yet, when pride and ambition aſſailed him, he could forget all the great things which God had done for his ſoul; could renounce his dependence on him whom he had ever found to be his ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble; and could build his hope on the number of his troops, and place his confidence in mortal men.

That this temper ſhould be diſpleaſing to God, will not appear ſtrange to thoſe who conſider the abſolute propriety which he claims in the human heart. This David was plainly taught in the writings of Moſes, which directed him to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his ſoul, and with all his might; to cleave unto him, to fear him, and ſerve him alone, all the days of

his life. Whatever, therefore, withdraws the heart from him, and leads men to place their confidence on any thing beſides him, muſt be offenſive to him, as it becomes his rival, and ſhares in that honour, and worſhip, and love, which are due to him alone.

But David was not ſingular in his defection from God. The hiſtory informs us, that "the anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Iſrael," and that David's being moved to number the people was the occaſion of bringing the judgment of the plague on them.

It would be impious to ſuppoſe that the anger of the Lord was kindled againſt them without reaſon; or that he ſhould puniſh the people of Iſrael becauſe David their king had fallen into a ſtate of defection from him. We muſt, therefore, conclude that ſome general corruption of religion or manners, which made them equally culpable with David, in the ſight of God, had provoked him to ſend that mortal plague upon them, by which both David and his people were equally puniſhed.

In what this general corruption conſiſted, muſt be left to probable conjecture to determine: The hiſtory ſays nothing of it. That it was not in the external profeſſion of their religion, ſeems highly probable, from the great care which David took to keep the Iſraelites in the worſhip of the true God, according to the law of Moſes.

But that great corruption of manners may ſubſiſt, where no great fault is to be found with the external form of religion, is evident from what we

know does happen under a religion, the ſanctions of which are vaſtly greater than were thoſe of the religion of Moſes, and extend into eternity.

The ſpoils of the countries which David had conquered, and the tribute they yearly paid him, muſt have made Judea very rich. To this muſt be added the immenſe profits of that extenſive commerce which he opened, and ſucceſsfully carried on, from the ports of the Red Sea, after he became maſter of its coaſts.

The vices commonly attendant on great wealth, are pride and arrogancy, luxury and ſenſuality, injuſtice and oppreſſion; and, as ſtrange as it may appear, covetouſneſs is oftener the conſequence of wealth than of poverty.

That great wealth ſhould produce the ſame effects among the Iſraelites, that it ever has done among other nations, is not ſurpriſing. Nor can we heſitate to believe, that the vices which accompany worldly proſperity became common, if not general among them, when David himſelf, celebrated for his religion and piety, and for every virtue that can adorn the monarch or the man, was infected and corrupted by the baneful influence of power and wealth.

Sixteen years before the commencement of the hiſtory of which we are now treating, according to the chronology of the Bible, David ſo far forgot his own dignity, his juſtice to his people, and his duty to God, as to be guilty of the two crimes of adultery and murder, aggravated by deliberation, and by a ſtupid acquieſcence under their guilt for nearly a

year. By the affecting parable of the ewe lamb, Nathan the prophet, whom God ſent to reprove him, reclaimed him to a due ſenſe of his heinous crimes, and of the dreadful ſituation he was in, while expoſed to the wrath of God, juſtly incenſed againſt him.

Deep and bitter was his repentance. In mercy God forgave the penitent, ſo far, at leaſt, as the law was concerned which required death for both adultery and murder. Some have interpreted the words of the prophet, "thou ſhalt not die," as an abſolution from eternal death or puniſhment; and I ſee no good reaſon to exclude this ſenſe of them.

However, as by his offences David had wickedly and wilfully tranſgreſſed the commands of God; had thereby furniſhed the enemies of God and religion with an opportunity of ridiculing and ſpeaking evil of the purity of the divine law; and as David ſtood in need of the corrections of mercy to recover him to amendment of life, and greater watchfulneſs for the time to come, Nathan adds the denunciation of ſevere judgments to the declaration of God's mercy.

Of theſe judgments, the unnatural rebellion of his ſon Abſalom was one. That rebellion, and the civil war that enſued, were heavy calamities to both David and his kingdom. As his people partook in his puniſhment, we muſt ſuppoſe they partook with him in guilt: if not in the guilt of the ſame crimes, yet in the guilt of crimes that were ſimilar, and which equally withdrew the heart from God.

No ſooner was Abſalom's army routed, and himſelf ſlain, than another revolt broke out under Sheba, the ſon of Bichri, which, though of no long continuance, was of a moſt alarming nature in the then diſordered ſtate of the country.

Theſe civil commotions, the object of which was to dethrone David, muſt have been a ſevere judgment on him, eſpecially as they owed their origin to the wickedneſs of his own ſon—a ſon whom he tenderly loved, and to whom he had ever been particularly indulgent. Indeed, a faulty indulgence to his children ſeems to have been a principal weakneſs in David. And probably it was owing to this indulgence, that ſeveral of them behaved ſo much amiſs in the latter part of David's life.

Be this as it may, it does not appear that theſe civil commotions, which muſt have greatly affected the people, not only by ſlaughter in the battle againſt Abſalom, but by the licentious deſtruction of private property, had any influence to reclaim the Iſraelites from their wickedneſs. For not more than a year after, God viſited them with famine for three years, year after year; a ſure proof that they were unamended by his former judgments.

Nor does the famine ſeem to have had greater influence upon their impenitent hearts, than a deſtructive civil war had produced. For before the country could poſſibly recover itſelf from the diſtreſs of the famine, even the next year after it ceaſed, behold "the anger of the Lord was again kindled againſt Iſrael; and David was moved to ſay, Go

number Iſrael and Judah," which brought a deſtructive peſtilence on them.

However equal David and the Iſraelites may have been in guilt, it ſeems neceſſary to diſtinguiſh between his crime and theirs. They appear to have been ſenſual and voluptuous, forgetful of God, unmindful of religious and moral obligations. In ſhort, they ſeem to have ſunk ſo deep into that ſtate of ſpiritual inſenſibility, which worldly proſperity is ever apt to produce, that it was hard for the judgments of God to reclaim and bring them to a better mind.

Though David's heart may have been equally corrupted by worldly proſperity, the evil diſpoſitions of his heart, which excited him to have his people numbered, appear to have been pride and ambition. Theſe filled him with vanity and the ſpirit of falſe glory; they debauched him away from his God; they made him forget the great things that God had done for him; they puffed him up with ſelf-confidence; and led him to place his truſt on the number and valour of his troops, and to look to them for ſafety and protection, for victory and conqueſt over his domeſtic and foreign enemies.

From the example of the Iſraelites we may learn the great danger of a rich and proſperous ſtate in this world. Its natural tendency is to ſeduce the heart from God, and to lead men to place their greateſt happineſs in bodily pleaſure—in the mere gratification of their animal nature. It tends alſo

to harden the heart in covetouſneſs and uſury, in oppreſſion, and to ſteel it againſt the ſoft and heavenly emotions of mercy and charity. And when it hath wrought its full effect, and its contagious influence hath become general, it never fails to bring down the judgments of God in vengeance on the guilty.

From the example of the Iſraelites we may alſo learn, that when guilty nations are not brought to repentance, and reformed by the judgments of God, his judgments will be repeated; and they generally follow cloſe upon each other. In the courſe of ſix years the Iſraelites were viſited with civil war, with famine, and with a dreadful plague and mortality.

From the example of David we may learn, that no vigour of body, however great—no mental abilities, however excellent—no religious attainments, however exalted—no eminency of virtue, however conſpicuous, can, in this life, place us above the weakneſſes of nature, or guard us ſecurely againſt its corrupt deſires. To live with caution in a vain world, in the conſtant practice of that denial of our evil paſſions and tempers which our holy religion requires, and in full ſubmiſſion to the will of God, whoſe ſtrength is our only ſecurity, is alone the foundation of virtue and happineſs to all rational nature.

If we ſurvey David's character and ſtate, we ſhall find him to have been a prophet, to whom God revealed himſelf by his ſpirit, and made known the wonders of his grace, and the deſigns of his

mercy to the children of men. We ſhall ſee him growing up from childhood, under the immediate and ſenſible diſplay of the providence of God in his favour, till he was fixed on the throne. We ſhall perceive him to have been preſerved in his exalted ſtation by the ſame almighty hand which raiſed him to it. We ſhall behold him eminently exemplary in the worſhip of God; particularly ſtudious to learn and do his will; and ſo deeply ſenſible of the power, juſtice, goodneſs, and mercy of his Creator and Preſerver, that it was the great delight of his life, to celebrate and declare theſe attributes to the world, in hymns and pſalms of adoration and praiſe. Yet, under all theſe advantages, he fell, even in advanced age, from his dependence on his God, and weakly made the ſtrength of his armies the confidence of his heart.

From his error learn wiſdom. Confide not in your own ſtrength, nor let worldly proſperity ſeduce your hearts from God: but, "truſt in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own underſtanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths."

DISCOURSE IV.

PART THE SECOND.

OBSERVATIONS ON DAVID's NUMBERING THE PEOPLE.

2 SAM. xxiv. 12. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I offer thee three things; chooſe thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.*

WHEN Joab had delivered in the number of the people, David's heart ſmote him at the recollection of what he had done. His vain diſpoſition of pride and ſelf-confidence gave way to the principles of duty and conſcience. He recollected his dependence on God; and his heart, deeply wounded by the reflection of his defection from him, burſt forth in expreſſions of penitence, and petitions for mercy and pardon: "I have ſinned greatly in that I have done: and now I beſeech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy ſervant, for I have done very fooliſhly."

The hiſtory informs us of the reaſon of David's compunction—how he came, at that time, to fall

into that ſtate of godly ſorrow which worketh repentance. By the direction of God, the prophet Gad went to him the morning after the number of the people had been given in, to expoſtulate with him on the great wickedneſs of his conduct; to repreſent to him the danger of the ſtate into which he had fallen; and to inform him that the hand of God was ſtretched out to correct him.

This circumſtance will furniſh ſome conſiderations worthy of our attention.

The firſt is the prevalence of good principles and religious habits.

More than nine months had been employed in taking the number of the people. If we conſider that the buſineſs was diſagreeable to Joab, and to the other generals, and that they gave it all the oppoſition in their power, it will appear highly probable that ſome time paſſed between its being firſt mentioned in council, and its being carried into execution. We muſt, therefore, ſuppoſe that a full year had elapſed ſince the beginning of David's defection.

All this time he ſeems to have continued bolſtered up by his vanity, and inſenſible of the provocation of his conduct to the juſtice of God. Yet, no ſooner was his error and wickedneſs pointed out to him by the prophet, than he forcibly felt the folly and ſin of giving way to the pride and vanity of his heart, and he meekly humbled himſelf before God.

This can be attributed to nothing but the prevalence of good principles in which he had been

educated, and the influence of the habits of religion in which he had lived. He had sinned greatly; he had continued in his sin for a year, and had stifled or disregarded the checks of conscience; yet his heart was not hardened; it was still susceptible of the impressions of divine grace, and felt the full force of the prophet's admonition.

To regard and reverence the pious and virtuous principles which the care of our parents and instructors hath instilled into our minds, and to habituate ourselves to the constant practice of all religious duties, ought to be the great care, the earnest endeavour of our lives. Where these are wanting, there seems to be nothing to which the grace of God can apply itself; no handle by which his spirit can take hold of us: growing old in sin, and daily sinking deeper in hardness and impenitency, we shall leave no chance for amendment, but through the bitter process of calamity and suffering: and the history of Pharaoh, the obstinately impenitent king of Egypt, ought to convince us, that even this process may be vain and ineffectual.

There is another consideration closely connected with this, which ought to be attentively regarded by all those who wish to preserve a consistency in their conduct, and their conscience void of offence —the duty of parents and instructors to fix deeply the principles of virtue and religion in the minds of their children and pupils.

In the days of Solomon it was wisdom to train up a child in the way he should go; and one benefit expected from it was, that when he was old he

would not depart from it. What, in the time of Solomon, was practiſed as wiſdom, ſeems now to be neglected as folly. External accompliſhments are regarded, and ſome attention is paid to thoſe qualities which fit a man to make a figure in the world, and to acquire its riches and its honours. But religion, which is to reconcile offending man to his Creator, and prepare him to live in happineſs with him in another, an eternal world, is little regarded; as if man were to live in no world but this; as if all the happineſs his nature is capable of receiving, were to be obtained in this miſerable, changeful, and periſhing ſcene of his being; as if his very exiſtence were to end with his life in this world, and he muſt look for no more.

The preſent mode of education, and the example ſet by people of mature age, can only impreſs young perſons with the opinion, that they are to expect all their happineſs from the vanities of the world, or the enjoyments of this life: we ought not, therefore, to be ſurprized if human life be ſpent in the ſordid acquiſition of the riches of the world, or a ſervile courting of its honours. The neceſſity of living in the denial and mortification of the evil tempers, and paſſions, and appetites of our nature, according to the religion and example of the holy and mortified Jeſus, that we may be fitted for the enjoyment of God's kingdom in heaven, where only the true happineſs of our nature is to be obtained, ſeems almoſt to be diſregarded: little care is taken to impreſs it by inſtruction, or to enforce it by example. Indeed, it does not appear to affect pa-

rents much, whether their children be happy or miſerable in the next life, provided they make a figure, and live in ſplendour in this. And, perhaps, one great cauſe of the decay of religion, of which the ſerious people that are left among us complain, is, the unreſtrained, undiſciplined, uninformed manner with regard to religion, in which the youth of both ſexes are ſuffered to grow up.

Careleſſneſs and inattention may be cauſes of this negligence in religious inſtruction: but the true reaſon ſeems to me to lie deeper, and to be founded in ſyſtem.

An opinion hath prevailed, that all religions are equal—all alike acceptable to God; that it ought to be the choice of a man's own heart, and not dictated to him by others; that, therefore, it is wrong to impreſs any religious opinions on young minds; but that they ought to grow up to maturity in a perfect vacuity of religious ſentiments, that ſo their religion may be their own proper choice, uninfluenced by any human authority of any kind whatever.

If the opinion, that all religions are equally good, and equally acceptable to God, be admitted, there will need but little ſagacity to prove that no religion is as good as any; and that a man of no religion at all is equally in favour with God, with the moſt ſerious, devout, and faithful Chriſtian.

The deſign of religion is to reconcile ſinful man to his holy Creator, that he may be happy with him—happy in his happineſs. Nothing, therefore, can be of any efficacy in religion, but as it is the

will of God. The contrivances of one man, of ten thouſand, of a million of men, muſt be vain and inſignificant. We know not that God will be ſatisfied or pleaſed with them; conſequently they can be no ground of a reaſonable faith, or of a ſure hope.

The will of God muſt, therefore, be ſought after, as the ground of all our religion, of all our faith, of all our hope and expectation. And, as it cannot be known by us, but by revelation from himſelf, to the ſtudy of his revelation we muſt apply ourſelves, with honeſt and upright hearts, uninfluenced by prejudice or party views, if we would approve ourſelves to be reaſonable men. To the ſtudy of divine revelation, we muſt add the honeſt efforts of our own lives, to obey punctually the will of God therein made known to us, and to let our converſation be ſuch as his revelation requires.

Though we ſhould allow that every man is to exerciſe his own judgment in this matter, and is ultimately to be governed by it; yet it ought to be remarked, and he ought to remember, that if he judge wrong, he does it at his own peril; God requires that he judge right, and hath given him abilities and capacity to do ſo. When I ſay ability and capacity to do ſo, I mean not to leave out inſtruction and information, whether of God's church or miniſters, or of religious and well-informed people; much leſs would I be thought to exclude the neceſſity of divine grace, the motions and inſpirations of the holy ſpirit of God.

That man hath natural ability to diſcover ſpiri-

tual and religious truths, I do not believe. Inſtruction is, therefore, neceſſary for him; and, provided it be drawn from its true ſources, and rightly propoſed to him, he hath ability and capacity to receive it. The foundation of all religious inſtruction is the revelation of God contained in the Holy Bible, and thence his church and miniſters ought to derive all that they require as neceſſary to ſalvation.

If, then, religious inſtruction be neceſſary for all men, it muſt be neceſſary for young people; and, therefore, ought to make a part, and a principal part, of the education of our children: they will otherwiſe grow up in ignorance of their higheſt good, or catch only ſuch religious principles as they find floating among thoſe with whom they converſe. The neceſſity of religion is great; it includes the certainty of man's being accountable for his actions, and lays the only ſure foundation of morality and virtue.

Since, then, our gracious Creator hath made known his will to us in his holy word, and hath laid open the whole proceſs of our ſalvation, ſo far as it is neceſſary for us to underſtand it; that we may reap the full benefit of it, it becomes our duty, and will be our inconceivable benefit, to ſtudy it ſeriouſly and honeſtly, to frame our religious ſentiments by it, and to frame our converſation according to it.

And that our children may not grow up in ignorance of that eternal world on which they muſt ſoon enter, and in which the goodneſs of God hath

taken all pains to make them perfectly happy; nor be left a prey to those wild and false religious systems which at present do, and probably ever will, beguile the minds and understandings of well-disposed people; but may obtain and be happy in the knowledge of salvation and hope of glory which we enjoy; it becomes our reasonable duty to educate and instruct our children, and all under our care, in the full knowledge and practice of the will of God, which the holy Scripture hath made known to us, and to confirm them fully in the faith and habit of it, by our own exact and conscientious example.

Among the other great benefits of a religious education and habits, this will not be a small one; that, should the strength of appetite or passion, the vanities of the world, the corrupt tempers of their own evil nature, lead them astray from their duty, the good principles and religious habits in which they have been educated will ever serve as a probable ground on which to hope for their amendment, and recovery to the practice of virtue and religion.

In so important and arduous a business, it would be folly to trust entirely to our own ability and sagacity. He must have lived a very little while, or very carelessly in the world, who is not fully convinced of the ignorance and weakness of his own mind, as well as of the evil tendency of his own passions and tempers. It is, therefore, natural to suppose, that he will, with a ready mind, avail himself of all the collateral helps which the goodness of God hath provided, to make him acquainted

with his will, and enable him to do his duty. The inſtructions of the church and miniſters of God will, therefore, be ever regarded as matters of great importance to explain the will of God in the holy Scriptures, and point out and enforce the practice of chriſtian duty.

Above all things, the well-informed Chriſtian will ever look for aid and ſupport to that divine grace which God hath promiſed to all who conſcientiouſly ſtrive to obey him—the motions and inſpirations of his holy and bleſſed Spirit, the author of every good thought, and without whom no worthy purpoſe can be brought to a happy iſſue. Remembering the words of the Lord Jeſus, that God will give his holy Spirit to thoſe who aſk of him the precious gift, they will humbly bow the knee before him, and aſk, and ſeek, and knock, that they may obtain and ever keep the preſence of that almighty and glorious Being, to ſupport them in all difficulties, and direct them in all circumſtances of their lives.

To return from this digreſſion:

The ſecond conſideration reſpecting God's ſending the prophet Gad to expoſtulate with David, relates to the method he took to recover him from his dangerous condition.

God had waited till David had completed his vain-glorious purpoſe; and he ſeems to have waited that David might have time to recollect himſelf, and return to his duty; or, if he did not, that he might be deprived of all excuſe and palliation of his crime. He then ſent his ordinary and ſtanding

Miniſter to him, to reprove and admoniſh him—the prophet Gad, David's ſeer; the prophet who attended on him, was his ſpiritual director, and, as it were, his domeſtic Chaplain.

Hence we may learn, that God regards his own Miniſters; and, except on thoſe extraordinary occaſions for which he ſees beſt to provide in an extraordinary way, uſeth their miniſtry to effect the purpoſes of his mercy and goodneſs towards his ſervants.—We ought, therefore, to reverence the Miniſters of God, to receive their admonitions with candour and patience, and to conſider them as acting by the authority and in the name of God, for our good.

Whether Gad had made any remonſtrance before this time we are not told. Poſſibly he ſaw no chance of ſucceeding, or his admonitions were ineffectual. He now came, however, not only to admoniſh and reprove, but armed with the terror of divine threats poſitively denounced: "Shall ſeven years of famine," ſaid the holy man, "come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they purſue thee? or, that there be three days peſtilence in thy land? now adviſe, and ſee what anſwer I ſhall return to him that ſent me." 2 Sam. xxiv. 13.

In 1 Chron. xxi. 12. only three years famine are mentioned. As that agrees better with the three months purſuit of enemies, and three days peſtilence, than the number mentioned in Samuel, the reading in Chronicles ſeems to be the preferable one. Critics have endeavoured to reconcile theſe

two places, without ſuppoſing any error in the number of either of them. They imagine that the three years of famine which the country had ſuffered, on account of the Gibeonites whom Saul had deſtroyed, are taken into the account in the book of Samuel. That famine had ceaſed, probably only partially, but one year. If thoſe four years be added to the three mentioned in Chronicles, they make the exact number, ſeven, mentioned in Samuel.

So ſerious a meſſage as was delivered by Gad touched David's heart. No room was left for evaſion—no hope to eſcape from him with whom he had to do. In this extremity, he caſt himſelf upon his goodneſs and mercy who willeth not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould repent and be ſaved.

Be the example of David kept ever freſh in our minds: and when it is our unhappineſs to offend againſt the divine Majeſty, let us not ſeek for palliations and excuſes; nor endeavour to throw the blame on others; nor charge it on the times, on our particular circumſtances or mode of life; nor on any thing elſe; but, with meek and penitent hearts, acknowledge our own vileneſs, and entreat the pardon and mercy of God.

This was the method which David purſued: and God ſo far regarded his penitence, that his iniquity roſe not againſt him to his final condemnation. Yet his defection had been ſo great, and of ſo long continuance, that infinite goodneſs ſaw it neceſſary to puniſh him in this world; and to pu-

niſh him in ſuch a way, as that the pride of his heart ſhould be effectually humbled, and his fooliſh confidence in a numerous hoſt brought utterly to nothing.

This is the ſecond inſtance which the hiſtory of David preſents to us of God's dealing with him in this manner. Againſt Uriah David ſinned greatly, and continued long in his iniquity—a whole year, without compunction. God then ſent Nathan the prophet to him, at that time his ſeer. By an artful parable of the poor man and his ewe lamb, Nathan brought David to condemn himſelf with his own mouth: "As the Lord liveth," ſaid David, "the man that hath done this thing"—hath violently taken from the poor man his ſolitary ewe lamb—"ſhall ſurely die. And he ſhall reſtore the lamb four-fold, becauſe he did this thing, and becauſe he had no pity." "Thou art the man," replied the holy Prophet; "thou haſt killed Uriah the Hittite with the ſword, and haſt taken his wife to be thy wife. Now, therefore, the ſword ſhall never depart from thine houſe. Behold," ſaith the Lord, "I will raiſe up evil againſt thee out of thine own houſe, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour." 2 Sam. xii.

So dreadful a declaration had its full effect on the offender. His heart felt its force: it felt alſo the horrible gulph of perdition into which it had fallen. Deeply humbled by penitence and a ſenſe of guilt, his lips refuſed not to utter the bitter compunction which oppreſſed his ſoul: "I have ſinned

againſt the Lord," was the ſhort, pathetic confeſſion he made to the Prophet. "If we confeſs our ſins, God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins." "The Lord alſo hath put away thy ſin; thou ſhalt not die," was the gracious anſwer of conſolation, which the mercy of God, by the mouth of his Prophet, vouchſafed unto him.*

"Thou ſhalt not die," God had ſaid. Grateful are the words of mercy. Grateful to the penitent heart is the forgiveneſs of God. The previous threat, however, remained in its full force. Bitter is the cup of vengeance; but the cup of vengeance is oftentimes the cup of mercy; and the ſame mercy which forgave David's ſin, obliged him to drink deeply of the wrath of God, in the rebellion, ſhameleſs conduct, and death of his ſon Abſalom, whom he tenderly loved; in the abuſe of his daughter Tamar; in the vile behaviour and death of his ſon Ammon; and in the attempted uſurpation of his ſon Adonijah, which ended, at laſt, in the death of violence alſo.

It is, indeed, of the mercy of God that he corrects ſinners in this life, and does not treaſure up their iniquities againſt the day of wrath, when he will render to every man according to his deeds. Thus God in mercy dealt with David: and as his mercy was not confined to David, but is extended over all his works, we have every reaſon to believe that he deals thus mercifully with us alſo.

That we need the correction of God, and de-

* On this occaſion, it is ſuppoſed, David wrote the 51ſt Pſalm.

ferve the chaftifement of his fatherly hand, there can be no doubt. And though I would not encourage the opinion, that all the calamities and misfortunes which happen to men are judgments upon them for their fins, yet no mortal can be fure that none of them are fo. All the evils we endure, all the evils of nature, are the conſequences of fin. No one, therefore, can tell, but that the loſſes, and ſickneſſes, and accidents that befall him, are corrections from God, to bring him to repentance and a better mind, that he may not be condemned with the evil world.

It certainly would do us no harm, to conſider in this light whatever perſonally happened to ourſelves, without extending the ſame opinion to others. As diſpenſations of God's providence to us, we certainly muſt conſider them, and we ought to regard them, as calls from him to "conſider our ways"—to "break off our ſins" by repentance—to abate the pride of our hearts—to abandon our confidence in worldly proſperity—to turn to him in holineſs of life—to devote ourſelves to him, and to make him the hope of our heart, and the confidence of our life forever.

The meſſage of the Prophet had thrown the penitent Monarch into deep diſtreſs, and that was not a little increaſed by the propoſal he had made. Hard was the alternative to chooſe between a long famine, a diſaſtrous war, or a mortal peſtilence—the "three ſore judgments" of God. How ſhould a king who loved his people determine which to take?

That the weight of either of these judgments would fall on the people, is evident; and that it would do so, was probably the source of David's distress. It looked as though he singly had pulled down the wrath of God upon an unoffending nation. But let us not judge hastily. God is just, indeed, to punish sinners: he is just, also, to spare the innocent.

Had the Israelites been innocent, their innocence, no doubt, would have been a shield of protection to them. Had David been the only guilty person, his punishment would have fallen individually on his own head. That they were not innocent, but had been partakers in David's crime, appears from their being made partakers in his calamity.

Let us remember that they were men like ourselves, subject to the same tempers and passions that we are: that having lived long under a prudent and warlike monarch, who had extended their dominion over all their neighbours, and enriched their country by conquest and by commerce, their hearts were lifted up with the pride of national prosperity, and they vainly considered great armies of disciplined men as the glory of their king, the foundation of their happiness, and the surest defence of their country.

Nor let it seem strange that, under their circumstances, they should fall into those evil habits which I formerly mentioned—luxury and intemperance, injustice and oppression, covetousness or the love of money, forgetfulness of God and disregard of reli-

gion. These are the crimes to which national prosperity so surely leadeth, that no nation ever rose to any high degree of power or wealth, without being tainted and corrupted by them.

They probably had looked on their late civil commotions as the mere effect of Absalom's ambition; and on the late famine which distressed their country, as the particular punishment of Saul's wickedness in destroying the Gibeonites; but on neither as the chastisement of God for their sins: and yet no good reason can be assigned, why they should suffer famine for Saul's crime, after he was dead, unless their sins, as well as his, had called the vengeance of heaven on them.

Continuing unreclaimed, it became necessary that the divine goodness should continue its correction, and send other judgments, more severe and more destructive, till they perceived and reverenced the hand from which they came, and were brought to repentance and amendment of life.

The perplexity into which David was thrown by the offer made to him by the Prophet, broke out in the most affecting exclamation—"I am in a great strait"—I know not which to choose; for, choose which I will, the consequence will be most dreadful. A due sense of God's mercy fortunately interposed, and determined his choice: "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is great, and let me not fall into the hand of man."

In this determination, David seems to have left it entirely with God, to visit him either with famine or pestilence; for he deprecates neither of

them, but earneſtly begs that he might "not fall into the hand of man"—under the power of his enemies; to flee three months before them, while they purſued.

The reaſon he aſſigns is both a religious and a prudent one; the Lord's "mercies are great," and he believed, that in the midſt of his judgment he would remember his mercy. But from men, from the neighbouring nations, no mercy could be expected, ſhould he become expoſed to their malice, or ſubjected to their power. Their countries had been overrun, their fortified cities demoliſhed by his victorious armies. Eagerly would they ſeize the opportunity of ſatiating their revenge, and returning that havock and deſolation on Iſrael which they had experienced from them.

Beſides; to a king and a conqueror, nothing could be more humiliating than to flee before an enemy whom he had often vanquiſhed; to be chaſed by thoſe whom he uſed to purſue; to receive the law of conqueſt from thoſe nations on whom he had formerly impoſed the yoke of ſubjection.

To this mortification, the conſideration of another circumſtance of no ſmall importance muſt be added—the diminution of military ſtrength which muſt happen in the ſlaughter of a three month's purſuit—the ravaging of the country—the captivity of the people—and the demolition of fortified cities.

Whatever may be thought of the phantom of military glory, theſe are real and diſtreſſing evils,

from which the country would not recover, but by time, and care, and expenſe. And as to the ſecurity of large and diſciplined armies, much would that be leſſened by their reduction, and more by the dejection of ſpirits which muſt enſue from ſo long and deſolating a calamity. How would thoſe men who were left ever recover their military confidence, or dare to look an enemy in the face from whom they had ſhamefully fled?

Prudently, therefore, as well as piouſly, did David determine, when he committed himſelf and his people to the correction of God's own hand, rather than endure the unrelenting malice of enraged and victorious enemies. God, he knew, would correct not to deſtroy, but to reform; and though he puniſh for a time, he would "turn at the laſt, and be gracious unto his ſervants."

Be this our comfort in all our diſtreſſes; in all the afflictive diſpenſations of God's providence—that his mercies are great—that he does not willingly afflict the children of men—that though his goodneſs may ſee it neceſſary to correct them for their ſins in this life, it is not to deſtroy but to reclaim them, by taking off their confidence from this world, and fixing it on himſelf, who alone is able to preſerve them from the diſtreſſes of this life, and from the ever-during anguiſh of ſin and guilt in the life to come.

Let us, then, place our confidence where it is due; and, renouncing all dependence for happineſs on the world, its riches, its pleaſures, its power,

its higheſt and moſt proſperous ſtate, let us look to him who made us; in whom we live; from whom we receive all that we enjoy; in whoſe hand is the management of all things, the diſpoſal of all events in time and in eternity—God Almighty—the only and all-gracious ſource of happineſs to all his creatures.

DISCOURSE IV.

PART THE THIRD.

OBSERVATIONS ON DAVID's NUMBERING THE PEOPLE.

2 SAM. xxiv. 15. *So the Lord ſent a peſtilence upon Iſrael, from the morning even to the time appointed; and there died of the people from Dan to Beer-ſheba, ſeventy thouſand men.*

DAVID had no ſooner made his determination to Gad, by requeſting to "fall into the hand of the Lord, and not into the hand of man," than God, in whoſe hand are the iſſues of life and death, of ſickneſs and health, ſent a peſtilence on Iſrael, through their whole country, from one extremity to the other: and ſo ſevere and mortal was the diſeaſe, that it killed, in a few hours, ſeventy thouſand men. That the peſtilence began the very morning on which Gad came to David, and immediately on David's making his election of one of the three judgments which the meſſage of the Prophet had offered to his choice, is evident: but how long it continued doth not ſo certainly appear.

According to our Bible, "the time appointed" for its continuance seems to be three days; and yet there is, from the history itself, strong reason to suppose it did not continue one sixth part of that time. For if we look to the history, no night will appear to have intervened, from the delivery of the message of the Prophet, to the making of the atonement at the threshing-floor of Araunah—all seems to have been transacted by the light of one day.

When David chose to fall into the hand of God, and not into the hand of man, it was because the Lord's "mercies are great." Had the pestilence continued the whole term of three days, there would have been nothing in the event to answer the strong faith and confidence which David placed in the mercy of God. For though God might have been merciful in not inflicting more judgments, or severer ones, or in limiting the continuance of the pestilence to three days, there would have been no mercy shown in mitigating the sentence denounced; and yet that was evidently the mercy in which David confided. "The Lord's mercies," said he, "are great, and, therefore, he trusted he would not extend the execution of the dreadful punishment to its utmost limit: and so firm a faith, so implicit a confidence in the mercy of God, surely found some return from infinite goodness.

We are informed by the history, that when the Angel, who executed the divine decree, stretched out his hand over Jerusalem, to smite it with the pestilence, "the Lord repented him of the evil,

and ſaid to the Angel that deſtroyed the people, it is enough: ſtay now thine hand." Had the plague continued three days, it would have run its full courſe, and could not, with any propriety, have been ſaid to have been *ſtayed:* nor could it have been ſaid, that "the Lord repented of the evil," if the full term of time allotted to that evil was fulfilled in the execution of it.

To ſolve this apparent difficulty, the Hebrew critics have obſerved, that the word which we have tranſlated, "the time appointed," is often uſed in the Hebrew Bible to expreſs, *the time appointed for their religious aſſemblies.* They, therefore, underſtand, that the plague continued from the morning to *the time appointed for offering the evening ſacrifice*—the ninth hour of the day, according to the Jewiſh reckoning, anſwering to our three o'clock in the afternoon. So that the peſtilence was, by the mercy of God, *ſtayed* about the middle of the afternoon of the ſame day on which it began.

If we ſuppoſe Gad to have attended on David at eight o'clock in the morning, it is probably as early as the ceremony of a court would permit: one hour may be allowed for his conference with the king; and then the plague began at nine: from nine to three o'clock in the afternoon are ſix hours. Or, if an earlier hour, ſix in the morning, be allotted for Gad's attendance, or for the beginning of the plague, there will be but nine hours till it ceaſed.—Fully, therefore, did the event juſtify the pious faith and holy confidence of David,

when he ſaid, " Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great."

I know nothing that can reaſonably be objected to this interpretation, unleſs it be drawn from what is ſaid of God's *repenting*. Should it be thought to aſcribe levity of will to Almighty God, and that to change the decree he had once made, through pity and an unwillingneſs to ſee men ſuffer under the infliction of thoſe judgments which his wiſdom and goodneſs had determined to be beſt for them, argued weakneſs in the divine nature; I beg that what was ſaid concerning the purpoſe of God when he inflicts puniſhment on ſinners in this world, may be brought to remembrance—God puniſheth, not to deſtroy, but to reform.

If, indeed, he ſhould ſee that no chaſtiſement would produce amendment, but would harden inſtead of reclaiming, it ought to be no wonder, if the ſentence of exciſion ſhould paſs againſt the guilty perſon or nation. For why ſhould God continue to correct, if correction do no good? Why puniſh, if puniſhment only harden the heart in iniquity, and enhance guilt?

The judgments of God in this world (and with them only are we at preſent concerned) are intended to ſupport his moral government; to convince the inhabitants of the earth that he is the Maker, the Preſerver, the Governor of all things—the Lord God Almighty—the only object of adoration, the only ſource of happineſs; and alſo to vindicate the juſtice, and equity, and mercy of all his ways to man.

Suppoſe, now, the judgments of his providence to have no effect in reforming an obſtinately impenitent perſon or nation; ſuppoſe further, that he ſees they never will have ſuch an effect: why ſhould not that perſon or nation be cut off? why ſhould they be left to corrupt others, and bring reproach on the juſtice and government of God? What reaſon can be given, why he who is the Lord of life and death, ſhould not remove them from the earth, in ſuch manner, and by ſuch means, as in his wiſdom he ſees beſt calculated to anſwer the gracious intentions of his goodneſs to the works of his hands?

"Why ſhould you be ſtricken any more?" ſaid Iſaiah, in an after period, to the nation of Judah; "you will revolt more and more: the whole head is ſick and the whole heart faint." No good principle, it ſeems, was left by which to mend them; no ſenſe of duty to God on which his judgments could operate to reform them; no ſentiment of piety, no wiſh of holineſs remaining, on which the divine and almighty Spirit of God could lay hold, to bring them to repentance and a better mind—"From the ſole of the foot even unto the head, there was no ſoundneſs," nothing but the incurable "wounds, and bruiſes, and putrefying ſores" of ſin and impenitency.

That this was the caſe of Pharaoh, the obdurate king of Egypt, we know from his hiſtory. The more he was corrected, the more he revolted; the more he was puniſhed, the more he refuſed correction, till deſtruction ſwept him away. Such, alſo,

was the case of the inhabitants of Canaan whom the armies of Israel drove from their country. The measure of their iniquity was full: they were ripe for destruction, when the vengeance of God was executed on them by the arm of Joshua. And such, at last, was the case of unhappy Jerusalem.

Ever ready was God to bless and protect his beloved Israel, to strengthen them in prosperity, to build them up in happiness; but they renounced that virtue and piety, they rejected that religion and fear of God, on which alone happiness can be built. They refused correction; they hated to be reformed; they became irreclaimably hardened in sin; and the sentence of God passed against them. "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" cried the meek and gracious Saviour of the world, "how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."—And desolate was it made by the Roman armies. Wherever the Jews were, there the eagles gathered together, and flocked round them, and preyed upon them, till they were utterly consumed.

Nor must we think that any thing singular happened to the Jews or old Canaanites. Similar judgments of God put an end to the empire and power of the Babylonians, Assyrians, Tyrians, Carthaginians, and many other old and later nations; and, at last, to the all-conquering Romans, to whom most of the nations of the European and Asiatic world have succeeded.

God is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. His nature changeth not, nor do the maxims of his government alter. He is ſtill the ſovereign Ruler of the univerſe, and ſtill his judgments are in all the earth. If the modern nations of the world follow the vices of antiquity, and tread in the ſteps of their enormous corruption, abandoned principles, and profligacy of manners, they muſt partake in their puniſhment alſo—" except they repent, they ſhall all likewiſe periſh."

But when the chaſtiſements of God anſwer the purpoſe for which they were ſent, by producing repentance, and ſuch amendment of life as God will accept, their end is accompliſhed: of courſe they will ceaſe; for ſhould they continue, they would no longer be puniſhment; they would become cruelty.

That the peſtilence which God ſent on the Iſraelites did produce its proper effect—did bring both David and his people to a true and penitent ſenſe of their wickedneſs and guilt before God, we have a right to conclude from the event—" God repented him of the evil, and ſaid to the Angel that deſtroyed the people, it is enough; ſtay now thine hand." The end of the peſtilence was anſwered. With penitence and humility, with weeping and mourning, they bewailed and renounced their ſins, and turned unto the God of their ſalvation.

But there is more than the bare event on which to build this opinion.

When David received the meſſage of Gad, he

became ſenſible of his ſin in numbering the people, and deeply penitent on account of it. We ſhall do no violence to the nature of God, nor bring any charge againſt the juſtice of his government, by ſuppoſing that, if David had been the only perſon concerned, his ſin, upon his ſincere repentance, would have been paſſed over without puniſhment. And, in truth, we do not find that the judgment of the peſtilence fell particularly on him or any of his family. But David was a public perſon—the head of his people. They had ſinned, and the anger of the Lord was kindled againſt them. It was, therefore, neceſſary they ſhould be brought to repentance—reclaimed from their evil ways to a ſenſe of their duty; and, in their ſuffering, David ſuffered alſo.

Whether we ſuppoſe that Gad left David after his conference, or, as ſeems to be moſt probable, continued with him, there can be no doubt that the compunction of heart his meſſage had excited, remained ſtrong upon him—ſo ſtrong, that he appears to have aſſembled the Elders of the people—the Sanhedrim probably of Jeruſalem—and to have clothed them, with himſelf, in ſackcloth, to deprecate the threatened vengeance of God.

For, the next circumſtance recorded is the viſible appearance of an Angel in the middle region between the heaven and the earth, having a drawn ſword in his hand ſtretched over Jeruſalem, to ſmite it with the peſtilence. When "David and the Elders of Iſrael, who were clothed in ſackcloth," in token of their deep humility and contrition for

their ſins, ſaw the Angel, they "fell on their faces." 1 Chron. xxi. 16.

Here is every appearance of holy fear, firm truſt, humble reſignation, and unfeigned repentance, both on the part of David and of the Elders, that poſſibly could be ſhown. It was ſuch as God was pleaſed to accept, and to ſtop the progreſs of the deſtroying Angel. Not that God had changed his purpoſe—His purpoſe was to reform, and bring home to himſelf the nation of Iſrael, which had, like loſt ſheep, erred and ſtrayed from him. But the nation had changed its ſtate, and the purpoſe of God was accompliſhed in their repentance.

One circumſtance of David's conduct, noted in ſacred hiſtory, is particularly affecting. When he ſaw the Angel in the act of ſmiting Jeruſalem, being conſcious that the people, through the country, were momently falling by premature death inflicted by the vengeance of God, the thought that they ſuffered through his fault ruſhed on his mind, and pierced his heart with unutterable grief. Like a good man, the father as well as the king of his people, he conſiders himſelf not as the partner of their wickedneſs, but as the only offender. To God, in whom he truſted that he would mitigate the ſentence he had pronounced, he addreſſed the ſentiments of his contrite heart: "Lo, I have ſinned, and I have done wickedly." I commanded the people to be numbered: "but theſe ſheep, what have they done?" Few, if any of them, were concerned in that fatal buſineſs. "Let thine hand," O Lord, "I pray thee, be againſt me, and

againſt my father's houſe;" but not againſt thy people.

Nothing can give greater pain to a religious mind, than the conſciouſneſs of having led others into ſin: the deepeſt contrition, the bittereſt ſorrow, will ever attend the full ſenſe of it. But when this mortifying recollection comes home to a perſon in high office, a king, a governor, a ruler, a director of the people, to any one who ought to be an example of goodneſs to others, double will be the portion of its bitterneſs.

Judge, therefore, of the pangs of David's heart, how ſharp, how ſevere, how humiliating they muſt have been. Inſtead of checking the licentiouſneſs of his people, and reſtraining them within that line which their holy religion marked out for them, he had ſet them the example of pride and ſelf-confidence. Inſtead of ſetting before them a pattern of temperance, ſobriety, and ſelf-denial, he had careleſſly left them to riot, after his example, in the ſenſuality of luxury and diſſipation. Inſtead of teaching them dependence on God for protection and ſafety, he had led them to rely on the military character of their king, and to truſt to the number and valour of his armed men.

Of theſe circumſtances David muſt have been conſcious; and, when he ſaw the people fall by the wrath of God, in a peſtilential diſeaſe—a diſeaſe brought inſtantly on them by the pride and vanity of his own heart; that conſciouſneſs pierced his mind with pangs too great for utterance, and almoſt too great for mortality to bear.

He knew—what every obſerver of the ſtate of human ſociety muſt know—how great the influence is, how widely extended the example of men eminent in ſtation or character: that their ſentiments would be adopted, their manners imitated, their conduct in life copied, and followed by thoſe who were able, and by many who were unable to bear the expence: that no human wiſdom or foreſight could reach the extent of the operation of ſuch a power, or ſee where its effects would ceaſe: that, let the example be ſuch as coincided with the corrupt paſſions and tempers of human nature, it would deſcend from rank to rank among the people, till the whole community was corrupted and debauched by it.

Such reflections muſt have occurred to David: and as he knew his own example had not, in all inſtances, been ſuch as became his ſtation and character, either as a king, or a ſervant and prophet of God, they muſt have added greatly to the anguiſh of his mind for his foul offence. He now ſaw evidently the truth of a poſition, which he probably had ever owned in theory, though he had not always regulated his practice by it—that great ſins, in which we long continue without repentance, will not fail to bring the judgments of God upon the guilty.—This he ſaw, and this he felt.

Be this a caution to all men, not to let their influence and example be a ſnare to others, and lead them into ſin; leſt the bitterneſs of David's repentance, if not the weight of his puniſhment, become theirs. We are not kings nor governors;

but every man has some degree of authority or influence. Be that authority and influence employed to restrain licentiousness and vice, to enforce the practice of virtue, to recommend the duties of religion to all with whom they converse. They will thereby escape the horrid guilt of leading others into sin, secure to themselves the conscious approbation of their own hearts, and have the approbation and favour of God for their reward.

The history informs us, that there died in this pestilence seventy thousand men.

Remarkable was the procedure of divine justice in this matter, and highly worthy of our most serious regard: and happy will it be for us, if it make so deep an impression on us, as to regulate our practice through life. David prided himself in the number of armed men he could bring into the field: on them he placed his confidence; and that ill-placed confidence seduced his heart from God. And, behold, of those very men on whose number and valour he relied for protection; who, he hoped, would be ample security against all his enemies; seventy thousand are, in a few hours, swept away by the blast of God's displeasure.—Vain are all dependencies when God is not with us—idle are all expectations that are not derived from his power and goodness.

Nor is this true in military affairs alone, or in the concerns of kingdoms and states. It is equally true in all the businesses and occupations of life. When we manage them according to the will of God, and in humble dependence on his goodness,

they are in a right train, and we may cheerfully hope for his favour and protection. But if we leave him out of the account, and truft to the creatures of his hand, to the exertions of our own ftrength, or contrivances of our own wifdom for happineſs, or ſecurity againſt the evils of life, we do juſt what David did when he numbered the people.

And mercifully would God deal with us, if he reclaim us to our duty by trouble and affliction; if he bring us home to himſelf by pain and ſorrow; if, to convince us of our dependence on him, he ſtrike away the props of all worldly hopes from under us, and oblige us to catch at him for ſupport.

No ſooner had the Angel, at the command of God, ſtayed his hand which was ſtretched out over Jeruſalem, than Gad, by order of the Angel, (Chronicles) directed David to "go up and build an altar unto the Lord in the threſhing-floor of Araunah the Jebuſite." On this altar, as the ſequel informs us, David offered *burnt-offerings*—offerings of expiation and atonement for ſin; and *peace-offerings*—offerings of thankſgiving to God for his goodneſs in regarding the contrition and penitence of his people, in accepting an atonement for their ſin, and in ſtaying the hand of the Angel of deſtruction.

St. Paul hath remarked, that, "without ſhedding of blood, there is no remiſſion" of ſin. (Heb. ix. 22.) The meaning of St. Paul is, that the law knew of no atonement, had appointed no expiation for ſin but the blood of ſome animal, ſlain as

a ſubſtitute for the offender. He hath alſo ſaid, "It is not poſſible that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins;" and, we may add, of any other animal, by any power or virtue of its own. Yet, if we trace this matter up, we ſhall find that bloody ſacrifices—the taking away the life of ſome animal, by ſhedding its blood as a ſacrifice of atonement for ſin, were ever in uſe, till after the coming of Chriſt; not only under the law of Moſes, and among the Jews, but prior to that law, and among all nations.

By the hiſtory of the Bible, ſacrifices may be traced up to within a little while after the defection of Adam. And as it is confeſſed that they are unnatural and unreaſonable, that is, could never have been dictated either by reaſon or nature, we muſt refer them to the inſtitution of God. Of this inſtitution, the moſt probable time is, when God gave the promiſe of a Saviour to Adam and Eve, under the character of the bruiſer of the ſerpent.

This Saviour, in proceſs of time, came into the world, and made atonement for ſin by ſacrificing the fallen nature of Adam, ſubjecting it to death, the threatened penalty of his tranſgreſſion. Of this ſacrifice of Chriſt once made, all animal ſacrifices made according to the inſtitution of God, were typical, and from it borrowed all their virtue. But the true ſacrifice of atonement having been made and fully completed by the ſhedding of the blood of Chriſt, the animal ſacrifices which were typical of it, and looked forward to it for virtue,

and efficacy, being fulfilled in their archetype, of courſe ceaſed, and were done away. In their ſtead, the old thank-offering of the fruits of the earth remains in the Church of Chriſt—bread and wine—broken, offered, and ſanctified to be a memorial before God of the death of his Son for ſin, to thank him for all the benefits of his death, and to make all faithful receivers partakers of them. Therefore is this ſacrifice of the church ſtiled the Euchariſt—the ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving. And as all the bloody ſacrifices of animals looked forward to the ſacrifice of Chriſt, as being types of it, ſo the ſacrifice of the Euchariſt looks back to the ſame ſacred and bleſſed event, as to the great original, of which it is the repreſentation, and from which it draws all its virtue and efficacy.

To return—It was remarked, that by ſending the prophet Gad, David's ſeer, to deliver his meſſage to him, God gave us an undeniable proof of his regard for his own miniſters: here he hath given us the ſame proof of his regard for his own inſtitutions. He had accepted the penitence and humiliation of David and the Iſraelites, and had commanded the Angel of death to ſtay his hand; yet he would do honour to the inſtituted means of atonement. By his Angel he ordered Gad to direct David to build an altar, and have the accuſtomed ſacrifices offered for ſin, in a place of his own immediate appointment.

I note this latter circumſtance, becauſe the tabernacle and altar on which the Iſraelites were ordered to offer their ſacrifices of atonement, were

then at Gibeon, and on the preſent emergency out of their reach: to obviate that difficulty, God interpoſed his own direction. 1 Chron. xxi. 20.

Hence one leſſon may be learned; and I hope it will be thought an important one—not to deſpiſe the inſtitutions of God—not to neglect the ordinances of our holy religion. That God can bleſs us and ſave us without them, I well know. The queſtion is, what he hath promiſed to do?

That God could have ſaved the Iſraelites from the peſtilence, without the altar and ſacrifices in the threſhing-floor of Araunah, there can be no doubt. Nay, the deſtroying Angel *was* reſtrained; the peſtilence was ſtayed. Yet, I preſume, every perſon will ſuppoſe with me, that, had David refuſed to build the altar and offer the ſacrifices according to the divine direction, becauſe God could ſave without them, becauſe the peſtilence was already ſtayed, becauſe he could not ſee the reaſon and neceſſity of them, the Angel would again have employed his deſtructive ſword in executing the decree of his Maſter.

Thoughtleſs man aſks what neceſſity there is for prayer, for public worſhip, for ſacraments? God knows our wants whether we pray to him or not, and can ſave us without prayer, and worſhip, and ſacraments, as well as with them; and ſuch is his goodneſs as well as power, that we may reſt aſſured, he will do ſo.

The diſpute is not about the goodneſs or power of God, what he can do; but what he hath promiſed he will do, and what he requires us to do.

Public worſhip is intended to recognize God as the Creator, Preſerver, and Sovereign Ruler of all things; thereby to preſerve and ſtrengthen our faith, and hope, and truſt in him, as our almighty protector, moſt merciful preſerver, the author of all good, the fountain of all happineſs. Of theſe ſentiments and tempers, love and obedience will be the natural conſequence: it is, therefore, neceſſary that they be produced, and ever growing and increaſing in us, that our love and obedience may be as full and perfect as the ſtate of humanity will permit.

The ſacraments of the church, and the prayers of the cloſet have the ſame tendency; they alſo mend the heart, by increaſing thoſe divine tempers and devout affections for which we pray, which we commemorate, and on which we meditate in the holy ſacraments. By increaſing theſe tempers and affections, we ſhall increaſe our diſpoſition and endeavour to live in them; we ſhall ſtrengthen the ſenſe of our dependence on God, and prepare ourſelves for a greater and more ready reception of the graces, motions, and inſpirations of the Almighty Spirit of God, the beginner, the promoter, the perfecter of every thing that is, or can be good in man.

To ſpeak more particularly of prayer—To ſuppoſe that the deſign of prayer is to prevail on God to alter his plans, and to deal with us, not according to his own wiſdom and goodneſs, but according to our weak and often ill-judged petitions, is an idle whim, and ought never to enter the head

of a reaſonable man. God will ever do what is right, both to us and to all his creatures, whether we pray to him or not. If prayer produce in us holy, and divine, and heavenly affections, and excite us to live a holy, heavenly, and divine life, it opens the way for God to treat us as perſons poſſeſſed of thoſe affections, as leading that life; to give us many good things ſuitable to our ſtate; particularly, more manifold gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit, which, were thoſe divine tempers wanting in us, would do us no good, becauſe we ſhould make no uſe of them.

The effect of prayer is, therefore, to change and mend our own hearts, to alter our ſtate toward God, to make our tempers and lives more holy and heavenly, and thereby to prepare and enable us to receive and comply with the motions and inſpirations of his Holy Spirit in us; not to alter and change the purpoſes or deſigns of God towards us, which ever are to do us good by all the means which infinite power, and wiſdom, and goodneſs, and love, can exerciſe.

"God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." If, therefore, we wiſh to receive the grace of God in our hearts, we muſt empty them of all pride, and we muſt live in all habits of humility. The proud heart is too full of its own importance to admit the grace of God into it. It is only with the humble ſoul, empty of vain, ſelf-aggrandizing views, that his grace and ſpirit can dwell. To obtain this ſtate, prayer is a principal inſtrument. To pray for humble ſentiments, exerciſeth them,

and enforces the neceſſity of living in them; for it would be a ſhame, not to live as we pray—not to exerciſe, in the daily habits of our converſation, thoſe ſentiments, deſires, and tempers which dictate our prayers. Now, whatever ſentiments and habits are in continual exerciſe, will grow and increaſe in ſtrength: this is the order and ſtate of our nature.

All Chriſtian virtues are in the ſame ſtate with regard to us, that humility is in. If the heart be full of the oppoſite vice, they neither can grow, nor enter there. Conſtant and earneſt prayer will have the ſame effect on them all that it hath on humility. It will expel from the heart whatever oppoſes them; it will produce and increaſe them in us; it will invite the Holy Spirit to come to us, to dwell with us, to rule and govern our hearts in the fear of God; and it will make us ſuſceptible of all his divine motions, and attentive and obedient to them.

And now let me, in my turn, aſk thoſe perſons who can ſee no neceſſity for prayer and ſacraments, becauſe God is good and powerful, and can and will do what is right and beſt, whether we worſhip and pray to him or not, why, upon the ſame principle, not leave off to eat and drink? What neceſſity is there for either? Man doth not live by them alone, but by the power of God, who can as eaſily preſerve life without them as with them.

Would the man, then, act reaſonably who ſhould attempt to live without eating and drinking, becauſe God can ſupport him without food? Full

as reaſonably as he acts with regard to his natural life, does that perſon act who expects to live the Chriſtian life without prayer and ſacraments, becauſe God can ſave him without them.

Eating and drinking are neceſſary for us, becauſe God hath appointed them for the ſupport of our natural life. And prayers and ſacraments are neceſſary for us, becauſe God hath appointed them to be the ſupport of our ſpiritual life. He who bleſſeth his own appointment in the one caſe, will alſo bleſs it in the other, and make it effectual to the purpoſe for which he intended it.

It will be our wiſdom to follow the directions of God. He who made and redeemed us, knows beſt what is right for us. To ſet up our own imaginations, and ſuppoſe we know better what is good and proper for us than he does, will be our folly; a folly of which we muſt deeply repent, or for which we muſt ſeverely ſuffer.

DISCOURSE IV.

PART THE FOURTH.

OBSERVATIONS ON DAVID's NUMBERING THE PEOPLE.

2 SAM. xxiv. 25. *And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings: so the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.*

WHEN David went up, by the direction which Gad, in the name of God, had given him, he found Araunah, with his four sons, at the floor, threshing wheat. They had seen the Angel in the air, with his drawn sword, threatening Jerusalem; and, terrified at his appearance, had endeavoured to hide themselves. Seeing the king approach, Araunah went to meet him, and bowed himself before him.

The history calls Araunah a Jebusite.—It is to be recollected, that about thirty years before this time, in the beginning of his reign over Israel, David took Jerusalem, whose former name appears

from Chronicles to have been Jebus, from the Jebuſites, and made it the ſeat of his royal reſidence. Moſt probably the family of Araunah, if not he himſelf, conciliated the favour of David on that occaſion, and were permitted to remain in the country, and retain their poſſeſſions.

The Jews had a tradition that he was of the royal family of the Jebuſites, and that he became a zealous proſelyte to their religion. The latter circumſtance is highly probable, and the former one ſeems to be directly ſupported by the twenty-third verſe of the context—"All theſe things did Araunah, a king, give unto the king." However this may have been, he certainly was a man of a reſpectable and religious character, of conſiderable wealth, and great generoſity.

Having done honour to the king, he requeſted to know the purport of his viſit. Being informed it was on a religious account, to purchaſe the threſhing-floor of him to build an altar to the Lord, that an atonement might be made for his own ſin, and for the ſin of the people, as God had directed, and an entire ſtop put to the ravages of the peſtilence, his heart inſtantly opened to the ſoft emotions of religion and humanity. Senſible of the piety of the deſign, of the urgency of the occaſion, of the neceſſity of obeying God, he waſted not the time in bargaining, but freely gave the floor, the oxen, the threſhing inſtruments, and the wheat, that no time might be loſt in providing what was neceſſary for a work ſo immediately ordered by God himſelf. To his generous gift he added his devout

prayer for the divine acceptance of David's ſacrifice.

Whether we conſider the piety, the humanity, or the generoſity of Araunah's conduct, we ſhall find much to admire and praiſe; and, I hope, on all proper occaſions, to imitate. A perſon, careleſs of the diſcharge of his duty to God, would have put no confidence in addreſſes and ſupplications to him, and would have been very indifferent whether any altar were built, or any ſacrifices offered. Had not the tender feelings of humanity expanded themſelves in his heart, he would have cared but little whether the peſtilence raged or ceaſed: his own ſecurity would have been all his concern. And, had an avaricious temper governed him, inſtead of giving without price, he would have ſeized the occaſion with eager hopes of making a good bargain.

The wealth of the king, the preſſure of the preſent circumſtances, his threſhing-floor the only ſpot that could fulfil the command of God—all theſe circumſtances would have preſſed hard on an ungenerous mind, and tempted it to extort the higheſt poſſible price. But no ſuch conſiderations entered the generous heart of Araunah; with the piety of a ſaint and the munificence of a monarch, he inſtantly obeyed the call of religion and humanity.

But, however pious and well intended the generoſity of Araunah may have been, it ſuited not the diſpoſition or ſituation of David to accept it: he therefore excuſed himſelf, and ſaid, "Nay; but I will ſurely buy it of thee at a price; neither will

I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God, of that which doth coſt me nothing."

Let it here be recollected, that David had been ordered to "rear an altar unto the Lord in the threſhing-floor of Araunah." The rearing an altar unto the Lord implied the dedication of it—the giving or ſetting it apart unto the ſervice of God. The dedication of the altar included the dedication of the ground on which the altar ſtood. While the ground was Araunah's, David had no right to dedicate it: that is, to give it away, by appropriating it to the ſervice of God; nor to build an altar upon it; for no one has a right to give away, or appropriate to his own uſe, that which belongs to another.

It was, therefore, neceſſary that David ſhould become the proprietor of the ground before he could, in his own right, dedicate it, or rear an altar to the Lord upon it; and he could become its proprietor only by gift or purchaſe. As a gift from the generoſity of Araunah, he declined to receive it, becauſe of the impropriety of offering to God at the expenſe of another perſon; for that would have been the real ſtate of the caſe, had he accepted Araunah's gift. His offer to give the threſhing-floor, and oxen, &c. was not as a gift for general purpoſes—for David to do as he pleaſed with it—but expreſſly for the ſervice of God. The offering, therefore, would have been Araunah's, and not David's: and David, in accepting it, would have been only the inſtrument of preſenting the

offering of another—he would have offered nothing of his own.

Besides; had David availed himself of the generosity of Araunah, there would have been the greatest appearance of his wanting liberality in the service of God. It would have looked as though he was glad to save his own property, and caught eagerly at the opportunity of being devout at the expense of another.

There was, therefore, strict propriety in David's conduct. He was directed to rear an altar for the purpose of offering sacrifices of atonement for the sins of himself and the people, that the pestilence might be stayed by the mercy of God. To him the command was particularly given. He was the head of the nation. He considered himself as the principal, the most guilty offender, and he insisted on doing all at his own expense—he would suffer no one to share it with him.

On this occasion David acted in exact conformity with the direction which the Holy Ghost hath given us by the pen of Solomon—"Honour the Lord with thy substance; and with the first fruits of all thy increase;" which the Greek thus renders—"Honour the Lord out of thy honest labours; and pay the first fruits to him out of thy just earnings—out of thy fruits of justice."

Hence it appears, that what a person appropriates to the service of God from the earnings of his own honest industry, is more acceptable to God, than what he hath obtained from the generosity of others.

From the example of David we may draw a leſſon of inſtruction.

The worſhip of God depends, in this country, on the liberality of chriſtian congregations. The neceſſary expenſes of building and repairing churches, and ſupporting miniſters, may by ſome be thought heavy. In particular inſtances it undoubtedly is ſo.

Under the law of Moſes, the preciſe portion of every man's earning which religion required was exactly aſcertained, and it was eſteemed by God injuſtice, and a robbery of him, to detain that proportion from him. If, under the goſpel, Chriſtians are left more to the dictates of that liberality which their religion enjoins, it is certainly a very bad reaſon why they ſhould act a niggard's part with him, from whom they receive all that they have, and on whom they depend for all that they hope; who alſo hath promiſed to "honour thoſe who honour him;" that is, to ſupport and take care of thoſe who honourably ſupport and take care of his worſhip and miniſters. And to the afore-cited paſſage from the Proverbs, "Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, and with the firſt fruits of all thy increaſe," there is an expreſs promiſe annexed, of the particular favour and bleſſing of heaven to the faithful obſerver of it; "ſo ſhall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy preſſes ſhall burſt out with new wine."

If we appeal to obſervation, either of ourſelves or of others, we ſhall find no one inſtance of a perſon's being made poor by his liberality to the reli-

gion of God, or in support of its ministers. Whatever hath been expended, hath been amply repaid by the secret, though sure blessing of that munificent Being, who "openeth his hand, and filleth all living creatures with plenteousness." Their store, like the handful of meal in the bottom of the barrel, and the pittance of oil in the cruse of the good widow of Sarepta, the more it was expended, dissipated, exhausted in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of men, the more it has grown, increased, multiplied, they knew not how—multiplied by his hand, who, though he work in secret, works so powerfully and surely, that nothing can resist or defeat his purpose.

If men are attached to this world, and feel no desire of happiness but what arises from it, it is not strange that they should prize their money above all things; that they should be exceedingly careful how they part with it, except to purchase those sensual pleasures they wish to enjoy; that they should esteem their money too precious to be expended in building churches for the celebration of the worship of God, or the support of his ministers; for, from these sources they expect no pleasure, and for heaven they have no wish.

Or, if men who profess themselves Christians, and to have hope in a better life, have suffered the love of this world to smother the efficacy of their religion and hope in God, with worldly cares and troubles, hopes and fears, pleasures and riches—though the support of their characters among their Christian neighbours, or some other worldly motive,

may oblige them to do ſomething—what they ſhall call their ſhare—in ſupport of religion; yet it will be only *their ſhare*; only what they cannot help, without ſinking themſelves low in the eſtimation of others. From their liberality nothing is to be expected. Neceſſity is their only mover; not the neceſſity which the command of God impoſes, but the ſupport of their own reputation and importance.

Urged by this neceſſity, they give; but they give grudgingly—*their ſhare* to a penny—while the mind dwells on all the ſums they have given on any occaſion, amaſſes them into one lump, calculates the intereſt, and reckoneth how much richer and better off they ſhould have been in worldly wealth, had there been no religion or miniſters to maintain.

The ſubject is too invidious to be purſued. To be thus backward in ſupporting the church and miniſters of God, with whatever is neceſſary for the decent celebration of the homage and adoration due to the Almighty Creator and Redeemer of men, and to the neceſſities and comfort of his ſervants who officiate by his authority in the congregations of his ſaints, ſhows a total abſence of the principles of chriſtianity from the heart. For did they in any degree influence the temper and diſpoſition, they would ſhow themſelves in a due attention to thoſe things which ſo nearly concern the honour of God, and the ſalvation of men.

It is, moreover, in direct contradiction to the direction of the Apoſtle, who ſaid, "Let him who

is taught in the word, miniſter to him that teacheth, in all good things:" plainly declaring the duty of him who is taught the knowledge of ſalvation through Chriſt, who is inſtructed in the will of God which leadeth unto life, and in all the ways of holineſs and piety, to miniſter of his worldly good things to the decent ſupport of his inſtructor, and to let him want no comfortable thing, whom God hath ſet over him in the Church, to miniſter to him the offices and ſacraments of religion, and direct him in all his ſpiritual concerns; that he may be able to attend conſtantly on his duty, without being diſturbed and diverted by the cares of providing for his temporal ſupport.

If we conſider the neceſſity of recognizing the power, dominion, and abſolute ſovereignty of the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, the preſerver of all things, the fountain of bleſſedneſs to all his creatures, in whom they live, and move, and have their being—the infinite love and goodneſs of their gracious Redeemer, the adorable Son of God, who emptied himſelf of the glories of the godhead, and became man, that he might deliver man from the power and curſe of ſin, and open to him the gate of everlaſting life—we muſt be blind and dead indeed to all ſpiritual concerns, if we ſee not the propriety and neceſſity of Chriſtians meeting together for the purpoſes of public adoration, on the day which God hath ſanctified to himſelf in his holy Church. Of the neceſſity of their having ſome place appropriated for their meeting, there can be no doubt; and, there ought to be none, of

the neceſſity of having this place decently finiſhed, and kept in decent repair, ſo far as our circumſtances ſhall permit, anſwerable to the dignity and awful majeſty of that auguſt Being whom we adore. To do this will require ſome portion of our worldly wealth; and that portion, whatever it may be, ought to be paid as a debt of juſtice, not as the gift of benevolence.

A moderate portion of the pious generoſity of Araunah, or of the diſintereſted temper of David, would be a better direction to us in this caſe, and a greater excitement to our duty, than the moſt learned diſcourſe. The one thought nothing too much for him to give for the ſervice of God, when preſent exigency required it. The other diſdained to ſerve God at another man's expenſe. Neither of them, it ſeems, thought the worſe of religion becauſe it was attended with expenſe, nor eſtimated its value in proportion to its cheapneſs.

They looked on religion as the diſpenſation of the love and mercy of God to degenerate, fallen man, intended to lead him through virtue and holineſs in this life, to bleſſedneſs and glory in heaven. Wearied with the guilt of ſin, and ſenſible of the diſpleaſure of God againſt thoſe who continued in it, they conſidered the appointment of bloody ſacrifices for its remiſſion as moſt benevolent in itſelf, and highly grateful to the guilty heart; diſplaying at once the wrath of God againſt the obſtinately wicked, and his merciful forgiveneſs to the penitent ſinner.

That particular ſervice which God had com-

manded for the expiation of the ſins which had brought his wrath on the land in a moſt deſtructive peſtilence, expanded their hearts with all the ſentiments of love and adoration towards God, of ſympathy and affection towards their fellow-men.

Under theſe impreſſions, they were not only content, but earneſtly ſolicitous to give up their worldly wealth to ſerve ſo divine a purpoſe; ſuppoſing whatever God commanded neceſſary to be done; not only becauſe it was his command, but becauſe it would ſecure the pardon, and promote the ſanctification and eternal happineſs of themſelves and others: therefore their riches became of no eſtimation. The ſervice of God required them, and they never could be ſo well expended as in advancing his glory, the good of mankind, and their own ſalvation.

To return to the hiſtory:

Convinced of the propriety of David's conduct, Araunah ſold him the threſhing-floor and the oxen; and David having built the altar as he was commanded, offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings on it. The atonement for his own ſin, and the ſin of the people, being made, God ſhowed his acceptance of his devotion, by ſending fire from heaven to conſume the ſacrifices.

The hiſtory then concludes with obſerving, that God commanded the deſtroying Angel, and he put up his ſword again into the ſheath thereof—He was intreated for the land, and the plague was ſtayed from Iſrael.

It appears, then, that though God had reſtrained

the Angel from deſtroying Jeruſalem, by commanding him to ſtay his hand, yet the complete ceſſation of the peſtilence, ſo as no more to return, did not take place till the atonement was made in the threſhing-floor of Araunah, as God had commanded. Till that was done, the Angel ſtood viſibly between the earth and the heaven, over the floor, with the ſword of deſtruction drawn in his hand, and only reſtrained from inflicting on Jeruſalem the dreadful ſtroke of deſolation, by the command of God. How awful the ſight! how dreadful the interval! How muſt every heart have rejoiced, and poured forth its gratitude to God, in acclamations of praiſe and thankſgivings, when they ſaw the conſuming fire of God, the emblem of his wrath, deſcend on the altar inſtead of the city, and the Angel of his vengeance mildly return the ſword of deſtruction into its ſheath!

Who can read this part of the ſtory, and not figure to himſelf that more awful day when the Son of man ſhall deſcend from heaven in full glory, with all his holy Angels; not to take vengeance on Jeruſalem and the Iſraelites, but to judge the world? When all who ever lived ſhall ſee him coming in the clouds of heaven, as the inhabitants of Jeruſalem ſaw the Angel of vengeance ſtanding in the air over their city?

They were delivered from the deſtruction of the peſtilence, by the atonement made at the threſhing-floor of Araunah. We have a more efficacious atonement than the blood of beaſts, even the pre-

cious blood of Chriſt, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world.

Only let us be careful to truſt in this atonement, to believe in this Saviour, and do all thoſe things which he hath commanded, in order to obtain remiſſion of our ſins and eternal life through him; even as David truſted in God, believed his word by his Prophet, and did the things which he commanded for the deliverance of himſelf and his people from their ſin, and from its puniſhment: then ſhall we receive a happy acquittal from the mouth of our Judge, when he cometh to judge the earth; and with gratitude and praiſe far exceeding that which the Iſraelites felt, when they ſaw the Angel ſheath his burning ſword, hear the joyful determination which his all-gracious lips ſhall pronounce: "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

It is more than probable, that, on this occaſion, God revealed to David, either directly by his ſpirit, or mediately by his Prophet Gad, that he intended to fix his name on that hill; and that his temple, which was to be the place of worſhip, and the centre of union to all the tribes of Iſreal, ſhould there be built. For it is ſaid, "When David ſaw that the Lord had anſwered him in the threſhing-floor of Araunah, then he ſacrificed there;" that is, he continued, in after time, to offer ſacrifices there; and ſaid, "This is the houſe of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Iſrael." 1 Chron. xxi. 28. xxii. 1.

It hath been remarked, that, at this time, the altar of burnt-offering was with the tabernacle at Gibeon. Thither David could not go to make the atonement, "becauſe of the ſword of the Angel of the Lord,"—becauſe of the raging of the peſtilence—and becauſe of the delay which the journey would occaſion.

It is certain, that, from the time he became convinced that the hill of Sion, the place of Araunah's threſhing-floor, was appointed by God to be the ſite of the temple which he once had determined to build, and which God had promiſed him ſhould be carried into effect by his ſon Solomon; he diligently employed himſelf in forming the plan of the houſe; in providing materials for its building, and appropriating money for its expenſe; in arranging the courſes of the Prieſts and Levites who were to officiate in it, and aſſigning to every one his proper duty; in directing his ſon Solomon, and in preparing every thing in his power, which could contribute to the magnificence, beauty, or convenience of the building.

There is little doubt but that the hill of Sion on which the temple was built, was the mount Moriah, where Abraham gave that ſignal proof of his faith and obedience, in offering up his ſon at the command of God. David, therefore, muſt have bought the whole hill, or, at leaſt, ſo large a portion of it as made ſufficient room for erecting the temple and its courts on it.

This view of the matter will open a way to reconcile the diſagreement there is between the books

of Samuel and Chronicles, with regard to the price which David paid to Araunah in this purchaſe. In Samuel, the money paid for the threſhing-floor and oxen, is ſaid to have been fifty ſhekels of ſilver, which, reckoning the ſhekel at its higheſt value—three ſhillings and four pence—comes only to eight pounds ſix ſhillings and eight pence. In Chronicles it is ſaid, David gave to Araunah for the place, ſix hundred ſhekels of gold. A ſhekel of gold is eſtimated at fifteen ſhillings ſterling, or twenty ſhillings our money.*

I, therefore, conclude that the price mentioned in Samuel relates merely to the encloſure of the threſhing-floor, on which David was directed to build the altar. But that when he found that God had accepted him there, by his ſending fire from heaven to conſume his ſacrifice, and by removing the peſtilence, and was convinced that God had choſen that hill to himſelf, to be from thenceforth the ſeat of his reſidence with his people, the place of worſhip and ſacrifice for all Iſrael, the ſituation of the temple which was to be built to the honour of his divine majeſty; he then bargained for the whole hill, or ſo much of it as was ſufficient for his purpoſe, and bought it for the ſum mentioned in the Chronicles—ſix hundred ſhekels of gold.

I have now gone through thoſe obſervations which occurred to me on conſidering this moſt affecting piece of ſacred hiſtory. The Chriſtian reader, I truſt, will reap ſome advantage from them.

* Goodwin's Moſes and Aaron.

If they ſhould excite a diſpoſition in him to read the Holy Scriptures with more attention to his own practice, with a view to draw inſtruction from them for his own conduct in life, as well as ſupport for his faith, and freſh motives to his piety, great indeed will be the advantage.

There is, however, one reflection ariſing from this ſubject, which I conſider of ſo much conſequence, that I cannot excuſe myſelf from taking notice of it. The character of David is deſervedly held in high eſtimation by all Chriſtian people. His defending his kingdom againſt its enemies, his enlarging it by conqueſt and enriching it by commerce, his governing it by juſtice and equity, his leaving it in full proſperity and glory to his ſucceſſor Solomon, have conſpired to eſtabliſh his reputation as a worthy man, and excellent monarch.

The attention he paid to the holy religion which God had appointed for the rule of his worſhip and life; his ready and punctual obedience to all the particular commands which God gave him, which acquired him the character of a man after God's own heart; his intention of building a temple to the honour of the Moſt High God; the purchaſe of the ground, and the preparation of materials and money which he made for carrying that deſign into effect; the divine and elevated compoſitions of his Pſalms; the fervent expreſſions of devotion, love, faith, holy attention, and deep penitence which are in them; the prophetic inſight into the myſterious diſpenſations of divine grace and mercy through Meſſiah, the bleſſings of his atonement,

the glory of his church, the salvation to be obtained in it, which they exhibit, have fixed his name as a most religious, devout, and divinely inspired person. God grant that every Christian may receive the full benefit of his example and instructions.

Yet, such is the corruption and weakness of human nature, with all these excellencies, we find his character soiled with very great and foul crimes. His adultery with Bathsheba, his murder of her husband Uriah, are great and aggravated blots in his reputation. They are, however, single blots—he persisted not, either in an adulterous or murderous life. Upon the admonition of the Prophet, such was the goodness of God, he recovered from his dangerous state of deadly sin; he rose from his foul apostasy from God; through the thorny path of bitter repentance, he recovered that state in the divine favour, of which his base sin had deprived him.

To learn wisdom from the folly of others, is one of the highest attainments of human prudence. From this instance of David's folly, let us learn to "abstain from fleshly lusts." They "war against the soul," and bring it into captivity to the body of sin and death. They make way for other more grievous sins to enter and deprave the heart; so that he who gives himself up to them, can never foresee the height of wickedness at which he may arrive, nor the depth of guilt into which he may sink. The lust of adultery made way for the malice of murder to enter the heart, and wound the conscience of David.

From him, too, we may learn the nature and efficacy of true repentance. When it is ſincere and hearty, it cleanſeth the conſcience from the deepeſt ſtain of guilt, through the merit of that atonement which it hath pleaſed God to accept for ſin, and reſtores again the ſinner to his favour and mercy. It is not, therefore, ſo much a ſingle act of ſin, which excludes us from the grace and mercy of God, as the hardened, impenitent ſtate which a perpetual repetition of ſinning—the habit of ſin—brings on us. Such habits gradually blind the mind and harden the heart to ſuch a degree, as at laſt to render repentance and amendment impracticable.

As fleſhly luſts drew David into the crimes of adultery and murder, ſo the natural pride and vanity of his heart led him into the crime of numbering the people. Whether any motions of repentance had ſtirred in his heart, before the prophet Gad delivered his meſſage to him, is uncertain. In 1 Chron. xxi. 6, &c. Joab is repreſented as ceaſing to number the people, before he had taken any account of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin. The reaſon aſſigned is, that the buſineſs was "abominable to Joab. And God was diſpleaſed with the thing, therefore he ſmote Iſrael." Then follows an account of David's penitence and confeſſion of his ſin, before Gad had been with him. If there be no anticipation in this account, it furniſhes a good reaſon why Levi and Benjamin were not numbered. It alſo proves that David's penitence began before the admonition of Gad—his conſcience be-

ing awakened by ſome alarming viſitation of God upon his people.

However this be, on Gad's admonition his heart appears to have been truly humbled and penitent. His after-conduct, and the conduct of the elders and people, ſhow every mark of real humiliation and penitence. We indeed muſt judge from appearances, and appearances may deceive us; but God ſeeth the heart, and cannot be deceived. He removed the plague, and ſent no after-judgment on Iſrael. But,

Suppoſing David and the elders to have acted hypocritically, or from the impulſe of their preſent fears only, without any laſting change of the heart and ſentiments: ſtill I ſuppoſe on offering the ſacrifice of atonement as Gad directed, the peſtilence would have ceaſed. Had they returned to their former ſins, other judgments would have followed; or they would have been left to the dictates of their own blind and impenitent hearts, till they were ripe for deſtruction.

The reaſon of my ſentiment is this: The judgments of God on public men and nations, are not only intended to produce a national repentance and reformation, but for the open diſplay of the ſovereign majeſty of God, and of the juſtice and equity of his moral government to the world, that all men may fear and adore him.

The crimes of David and the Iſraelites had been open; ſo were their profeſſions of repentance, and their compliance with the divine direction to make

an atonement, by ſacrificing in the threſhing-floor of Araunah. Theſe appearances were ſuch as all men would judge to be ſincere. Yet, if God ſaw otherwiſe, the removal of the plague would have tended to eſtabliſh the authority and juſtice of his moral government, as well as to make known his goodneſs and mercy to the world.

There is a caſe nearly in point in the hiſtory of Ahab. If we attend to the character of Ahab, we ſhall find it a very bad one: "He ſold himſelf to work wickedneſs, and did evil above all that were before him." When, however, the Prophet Elijah denounced the judgments of God againſt him for his wickedneſs, "he rent his clothes, and put ſackcloth on his fleſh, and faſted, and lay in ſackcloth, and went ſoftly." Yet Micaiah, in the next chapter of his hiſtory, gives him no better character, but again threatens him with the vengeance of God. Howbeit, ſuch was Ahab's penitential appearance, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, ſaying, "Seeſt thou how Ahab humbleth himſelf before me? becauſe he humbleth himſelf before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his ſon's days will I bring the evil upon his houſe."

This argument can extend no further than to the open public ſins of public men and nations, and to thoſe appearances of repentance which, though inſincere in themſelves, anſwer the end of God's moral government in the world. Nor, in that caſe, can it be extended further than to ward off

the preſent judgment, which probably will be followed by ſome heavier chaſtiſement.

But for them, or for particular private ſinners, to ſuppoſe there is any efficacy in an hypocritical, feigned repentance; or in that which proceeds from the alarm of preſent fear, and which permits the ſinner to return to his old wickedneſs, or which excites him only to a partial reformation of life, or to exchange one wicked courſe for another; to ſuppoſe that ſuch hypocritical pretenſions can have any effect to conciliate the favour of God, to leſſen his abhorrence of ſin or their puniſhment in a future world, is a moſt vile and fatal preſumption: Inſtead of mitigating, this feigned repentance will aggravate their ſin, and add greater weight to the vengeance of God.

No repentance can avail them but that which is hearty and ſincere; which reaches to all evil luſts, and habits, and tempers, and produces a real change of heart and life. Such repentance will be founded on faith in God's mercy, and in the merit of that atonement for ſin which Chriſt, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world," hath made by his own blood.

God grant this repentance to every member of that humanity for which Chriſt ſuffered. AMEN.

DISCOURSE V.

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, THE JUDGE OF THE WORLD, THE OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

JOHN v. 22, 23. *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*

THE text brings to our view ſome of the moſt important doctrines of our holy religion.

1. The divinity of Jeſus, the Son of God.

2. The right of judgment which the Father hath committed to him.

3. The duty which ariſes from this right committed to the Son; namely, "that all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

It is evident that the right or power of judgment committed to the Son, and the adoration due to him on that account, both belong to him becauſe he is the Son of God. It will, therefore,

be necessary to ascertain in what sense he is so, that we may submit to him as our Judge, and reverence him as the object of our adoration, not only with the piety of devout Christians, but with the understanding of reasonable men, who know in whom they believe.

A proper attention to the transaction recorded before the text, and to the conversation of Jesus with the Jews, in consequence of it, especially if that conversation be compared with other declarations of Jesus which the holy Evangelists have transmitted to us, will, I trust, ascertain to all reasonable and candid men, what they are to believe and do as Christians in this respect; and with this advantage—that the authority of Jesus will thereby become the ground both of their faith and practice.

At the pool of Bethesda, in Jerusalem, Jesus found a man who had laboured under an impotency of body thirty-eight years, and said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The words of Jesus were the words of power—the power of God omnipotent operated in them. The man, though before unable to get into the pool without help, rose at the word, took up his bed, and departed.

It was the sabbath day when this miracle was wrought. The Jews, who saw the man carrying his bed, reprimanded him for profaning the sabbath. He, thinking himself fully justified by his order who had made him well, pleaded that order in his own excuse. But not knowing Jesus, he

could give no information who it was that had commanded him to take up his bed and depart.

Jeſus afterwards found the man in the temple, and ſaid to him, "Behold, thou art made whole; ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee."

It is not likely this man could entertain any malicious intentions towards Jeſus, from whom he had received ſo great a benefit. Gratitude to God for his goodneſs towards him had probably carried him to the temple, when Jeſus found him there; and the ſame gratitude might excite a wiſh in him to make Jeſus known to the Jews, that they might reverence him as the Prophet of God. Whatever was his motive, he went and told the Jews who had reproved him for carrying his bed on the ſabbath day, that it was Jeſus who had cured him of his impotency.

Unaffected by the miracle which had been wrought, and which proved that the power of God reſided with Jeſus, they perſecuted and ſought to kill him, becauſe he had, as they ſuppoſed, profaned the ſabbath, by making the man whole, and directing him to carry his bed on that day.

On this occaſion, the Jews to whom the man gave the information, ſeem to have gone immediately to the temple, and directly to have urged their accuſation againſt Jeſus. His anſwer was, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"—God the Creator hath hitherto preſerved his creatures, and doeth good to them on the ſabbath day. After his example, who is my Father, I alſo work, and have done good to this man on the ſabbath day.

Instead of appeasing, this answer increased their malice against him. They now sought to kill him, not only for his supposed profanation of the sabbath, but also because he said that God was his Father, thereby making himself equal with God. They, therefore, understood him as calling God his Father in some sense peculiar to himself, and which made him equal with God. Not, therefore, his father by creation; for, in that sense, God is the Father of angels and men, who yet were never supposed to be equal with God; not by adoption, for, in that sense, they supposed all Jews to be the sons of God, yet never imagined them to be equal with him. But if he did not call himself the Son of God by creation, nor by adoption, but in a peculiar and exalted sense which made him equal with God, it must have been the Son of God by nature, equal with God in essence, as every son is of the same nature and essence with his father.—πατερα ιδιον ελεγε τον θεον —he said God was his own, his proper, his peculiar Father, in such a sense as to make him equally God with him—as much so as a son is equally a man with his father.

Should it be said, that this is representing the matter as the Jews understood Jesus, and not as he spake, I answer—The Jews expressed the sense plainly in which they understood him; and through the whole conversation Jesus never once contradicted it, or, in the least, endeavoured to correct any misrepresentation about it. They, therefore, rightly understood him, and rightly expressed his meaning. Nor is there any expression in the dis-

courſe which contradicts, or which, when fairly repreſented, does not comport with the ſenſe in which the Jews underſtood him; viz. that God was his proper, his peculiar Father, and he himſelf equally God with the Father.

Nor will it appear ſtrange that the Jews ſhould underſtand Jeſus in this ſenſe, if we conſider that they knew and believed that God had *one Son* equal in nature and eſſence with the Father. However they came by this knowledge, whether it was the remains of the original revelation of God to Adam, preſerved by oral tradition; or whether they had learned it from their ſcriptures, which certainly contain plain intimations of it; that it could not have been a novel doctrine among them, appears evidently from the following conſiderations.

Neither Jeſus nor his Apoſtles make any apology for introducing the doctrine of a Trinity, or diſtinctions of perſons in the godhead, as a fundamental principle of religion; but ſpeak of it as of a received ſentiment, well underſtood. They declare Jeſus to be the Son of God, but they take no pains to prove that God hath a Son, or give any illuſtration of the matter. Had it been a new poſition, it could not have paſſed off in the manner it did. A people ſo addicted to their own opinions as the Jews were, ſo acute in art and management, ſo diſpoſed to find fault with Jeſus and his Apoſtles, ſo determined to root Chriſtianity out of the world, or, at leaſt, to prevent it from gaining any credit in it, never would have permitted any reli-

gious sentiment to pass uncensured, had it been new or strange, or opposite to the principles of their own religion.

And yet it was not till many years after the New Testament was written, and Christianity had pervaded the world, that they found fault with the doctrine of the Trinity. True it is, they accused Jesus of blasphemy for saying that HE was the Son of God, but never for saying that God had a Son.

Familiar must the expressions, *Son of God*, and *Word of God*, have been among them when no censure was cast on the use of them, and no explanation of their meaning demanded: when St. John could write, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" and yet have no fault found by the Jews, either with the sentiment or the expression.

When, indeed, they perceived the disposition of the heathen to persecute Christianity, and that the doctrine of the Trinity had given offence to some of the philosophers, the hope of inflicting a deep and fatal wound on the religion of Jesus, tempted them not only to renounce that doctrine, but to give a new, and forced, and unnatural construction to their own Scriptures, which plainly taught it. Then we first hear, that when God said, "Let US make man in OUR image, after our likeness," he spoke to his Angels, or after the manner of earthly monarchs. But, where do we read, or where learn, that the Angels were ever taken into

council with God? They are his miniſters to execute his commands, not his adviſers to direct his proceedings.

And who were the earthly monarchs who gave riſe to this mode of expreſſion? When God ſaid, "Let us make man," neither monarch nor man had ſubſiſted on the earth. Beſides, the monarchic ſtyle *us* and *we* is rather of modern date. While monarchs ſuppoſed that they reigned in their own right, their ſtyle was *I* and *me*, (Dan. iii. 29. and vi. 26.) and it is only ſince they have been convinced that they reign by the conſent of their people, and that the power and majeſty of their people is centered in them, that the ſtyle hath been changed from the ſingular to the plural number.*

* Biſhop Patrick obſerves, in his Commentary on Levit. v. 19. that *Jonathan* (I ſuppoſe in his Targum) paraphraſes the laſt words of the verſe—"againſt the Lord"—*againſt the name of the Word of the Lord.* And notes, that the doctrine of the ever-bleſſed Trinity was not unknown to the ancient Jews; as appears from the frequent mention of the *Word of the Lord* in the Chaldee paraphraſts, where the Hebrew hath only JEHOVAH: For which, ſaith the Biſhop, I can ſee no reaſon at all, if there had not been a notion among them, of more perſons than one, who were JEHOVAH. It doth not always, indeed, carry this ſignification in it; but there are very many places where by the WORD *of the* LORD cannot be meant a *Word ſpoken by the Lord*, or any thing elſe, but a *perſon ſpeaking or acting, who is the Lord.* There is a famous inſtance of it in Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. where Jacob's vow is thus tranſlated by *Onkelos: Jacob vowed a vow, ſaying, If the* WORD *of the* LORD *will be with me, and keep me, &c. then ſhall the* WORD *of the* LORD *be my* GOD. Where the WORD *of the* LORD is ſo plainly made the object of his adoration, that it evidently ſhows they had a notion in thoſe days when *Onkelos* lived, (which was about our Saviour's time) of more perſons than one who was the LORD. The Hieruſalem Targum alſo ſpeaks this ſo clearly, that one cannot but be ſomething amazed to meet with ſuch expreſſions in it as thoſe upon Gen. iii. 22. *The* WORD *of the* LORD *ſaid, Behold*, Adam, *whom I have created, is my only-begotten in the world; as I am the only-begotten in the heavens above.* Which may fairly induce a belief, that St. John u ed the

Indeed, so commonly had the opinion of God's having a Son obtained among the Jews, and that his Son was sometimes to appear in the world for great and good purposes, that it had got among the heathen; or they had received it by oral tradition from Adam, and possibly had grafted on it the ridiculous notion of the children of their Gods. Nebuchadnezzar, at the fiery furnace, and the Roman Centurion, at the crucifixion of Jesus, both use the phrase, *the Son of God*, as a common, or, at least, a known expression.

The Christian faith teacheth us, that with the humanity of Jesus, the divinity of the eternal Son of God was united, so as to make him both God and man in one person. In his humanity he executed the offices of the Prophet and Priest of God, which were, by the Father, committed to him. Many things said of the Son of God are accommodated to his humanity, the nature in which he acted in this world; and to his prophetic office, which, in that nature, he executed by commission from the Father. Many of the objections which have been made to the divinity of the Son of God, have arisen from applying the expressions of Scripture, which relate to the human nature of Jesus, and to his executing in human nature the prophetic and sacerdotal offices which God committed to him, to the divine eternal nature which the Son had before he took humanity upon him, and which

known language of those times, when he declared our blessed Saviour's Godhead, under the name of the WORD, *who was in the beginning with God, and was God.*

reſided and operated in Jeſus, in conſequence of the union of the human and divine nature in him: or, from not attending to the faith which the Chriſtian Church, and the moſt ſtrenuous aſſertors of the doctrine of the bleſſed Trinity, ever held; viz. that the Father was the origin and fountain of the divinity; and that, therefore, the Son was *Deus de Deo, God of God.* But hence to argue that the Father muſt be prior to the Son, or that the Son muſt be inferior in nature to the Father, is to draw conſequences which the premiſes will not juſtify.

On this ſubject it is not poſſible always to ſpeak with ſtrict propriety; indeed not without ſome degree of abſurdity—ſuch is the ſcantineſs of human capacity. Nor does nature afford any ſimilitude by which we can exactly repreſent or explain it.

It is the nature of the ſun to ſend forth light, and it ever was; nor can we ſuppoſe an inſtant ſince the ſun exiſted, in which it did not do ſo. Though, therefore, light come from the ſun, yet it is coeval with the ſun, nor can imagination conceive it to have had a later beginning. We know that the ſun exiſts. For it is this perpetual efflux of light from the ſun, by which we know that it exiſts; which, indeed, makes it to be what it is. So it is the nature of the Father to generate the Son, not by an act of his will, nor by external neceſſity, but becauſe he is God; becauſe it is his nature ſo to do; and no inſtant ever exiſted in which this was not his nature. If, therefore, the Father be eternal, the Son is of the ſame eternity with him. And not only the eternity, but

the whole nature of the Father must be in the Son, or he would not *be his Son.*

There is, therefore, no subordination of the Son to the Father, but that of order—none of nature—none but what arises from the relation of Father and Son: the Father being the origin from whom the Son is, and ever hath been, and ever will be generated, from eternity to eternity.

If we consider the generation of the Son as a transaction which is passed, and done, and ended, obscurity and difficulty will surround us. But the nature of God changeth not—he is ever the same. If it ever was the nature of the Father to beget the Son, it is so now, and ever will be so. The geniture of the Son is, therefore, a permanent continuance of the operation of the divine nature, which never began, and never will end. And from, or in consequence of this eternal, incessant generation of the Son, is the procession of the Holy Ghost, who, with the Father and the Son, is one God Almighty. In this unbeginning, never-ending generation and procession, consists the unity, the consubstantiality, the oneness of essence, the co-eternity and co-equality of the persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, and the felicity of God himself.

The Son must be of the same nature with the Father, because it is essential to the character of a son to be so. Distinct persons they may be, and they are, in the Scriptures, described as being so, and distinct operations are attributed to them: but one undivided essence, one God Almighty they

muſt be; for God is indiviſible, without body or parts.

On this ground, what Jeſus ſaid of his being in heaven, while he was here on earth; of his being one with the Father; of his being before Abraham was, is ſtrictly intelligible; though the unity of the godhead, and the diſtinction of perſons in it, be above the reach of our limited capacities. But why a perſon who believes the unity of God, ſhould quarrel with the diſtinction of perſons in the godhead, becauſe he cannot comprehend it, I ſee not the reaſon. To conceive of the ſimple unity of God, is as hard to the human mind, as to conceive of a Trinity of perſons in that unity; and the argument, from the want of comprehenſion, is juſt as ſtrong in the one caſe, as in the other—They are both incomprehenſible.

With regard to the eternity of the Son of God, there is one conſideration ariſing from the repreſentation which the Holy Scriptures give us of the nature of God, which appears to me to put that matter beyond all diſpute or doubt. Of God they ſay, that he "only hath immortality," dwelling in light unapproachable; and is inviſible. (1 Tim. vi. 16.) That the Son is "the brightneſs," the outward manifeſtation or diſplay of "his glory"—that is, whatever of God is manifeſted to his creatures, is by and through the Son, by whom he created, by whom he redeemed, and by whom he governs the world. (Heb. i. 2, 3.) Had there, then, been a time when the Son did not exiſt, what manifeſtation of God, what diſplay of his glory, could poſ-

ſibly have been made? And how could the Son have been created, or produced into being? The creation, or production of the Son, muſt have been a diſplay of the glory of God: but when the Son was not, there was no medium by which to diſplay his glory.

This view of the matter will lead us to the true underſtanding of thoſe paſſages of Scripture which mention the viſible appearance of God to Adam, Abraham, and others. God the Father is inviſible; no man hath ſeen his ſhape at any time, nor heard his voice. (John v. 37.) It muſt, therefore, have been the appearance of the Son of God which the Scriptures mean. And the hiſtory of thoſe appearances generally gives us a teſt by which to diſtinguiſh him from an Angel ſent to execute the command of God—the requiſition or acceptance of divine adoration.

In John xiv. 9. Jeſus ſaith, "He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father." How can this be true, unleſs the Son be the image, the viſible manifeſtation of the Father? He, therefore, who ſeeth him, and heareth his doctrine, ſeeth the Father, and knoweth his will.

When God ſaw beſt, the Son of God took human nature upon him in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and was made, or became man, even the God-man, Jeſus Chriſt. In human nature he was capable of making expiation for the ſin of man, by offering himſelf a ſin-offering, or ſacrifice of atonement to God; that, by ſuffering in human nature, he might reconcile God to man who had ſinned

againſt him. And, by reſtoring the Holy Spirit who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, to man, enable him, through penitence, faith, and obedience, to be reconciled to God, that he might be happy with him in heaven, according to the original deſign of his creation. 2 Cor. v. 18, &c.

That this was the deſign of God in the redemption of the world is evident. But to give full efficacy to that deſign, and lead man, through penitence and holineſs, to reconciliation with God, it became neceſſary that man ſhould be fully inſtructed in the will of God, that he might conform himſelf to it, and live as God ſhould direct. That he ſhould alſo be inſtructed in the nature of the atonement made for ſin, that he might believe it, and rely on it in the authority and dignity of the Perſon who made the atonement, and inſtructed him in the will of God, that he might confide in his merit, receive his inſtructions as the conditions of his acceptance through the atonement, and mark his example as the rule of his life; in the nature and office of the Holy Ghoſt, through whom he was to be enabled to do all that was to be required of him.

It, therefore, became neceſſary that Jeſus, the Son of God, united to human nature, ſhould be commiſſioned of God to be his *Prophet* to the world, to inſtruct them in the will of God, and in the things they were to do in order to be reconciled to God and that he ſhould give the moſt indubitable proof that he was thus commiſſioned and ſent of God. This Jeſus did do, by a long ſeries

of astonishing miracles, performed publicly in the country of Judea.

It was also necessary that he should be appointed the *Priest of God*, to make atonement for sin, and reconcile God and men together, whom the sin of the latter had parted asunder. Of this appointment Jesus gave the fullest proof, and made a complete and perfect atonement and satisfaction for the sin of the world, by offering himself to God, and dying on the cross. Therefore is Jesus the *Mediator* of the new covenant, by which man is admitted to new and mild terms of salvation, through faith in his blood—standing in the middle space to reconcile a holy God to offending man, by procuring for him remission of sins; and sinful man to the God of purity, by the sanctification of his spirit.

Of this Saviour Jesus, God and man united, commissioned of God to be his Priest and Prophet to the world, by the full effusion of the Holy Ghost upon him, without measure or limit, and confirmed by the miracles and mighty works which he wrought, are those expressions in the Scriptures to be understood which speak of God's *giving*, *granting*, *showing* unto the Son; of the Son's doing his works in imitation of the Father; of his having all power committed unto him, and being constituted head over all things in heaven and in earth.

To the Son of God all power and dominion belonged from eternity. Those things were ever his by nature, and could not be given or granted to

him. Such expreſſions, therefore, relate to the God-man Jeſus Chriſt, acting by commiſſion from God, as his Prieſt and Prophet to the world, and, particularly, as the Governor and final Judge of it.

This is the ſecond thing which the text preſents to our conſideration. I ſhall, therefore, endeavour to ſhow, that this right of judgment is committed to Jeſus Chriſt, as he is the Son of God made man —manifeſted in human fleſh.

To this point the text bears decided teſtimony —"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." To the Son this right belonged from eternity, ſeeing he is the creator and upholder of all things. But as Jeſus, the Saviour, the Redeemer of the world, is not only the Son of God, but the Son of man alſo, this judgment is committed to him. John v. 27.

That Jeſus is conſtituted Judge of the world, there are ſo many expreſs declarations of the Holy Scriptures, that it is unneceſſary to cite them.

The office of a Judge is to examine the ſtate of thoſe who are ſubject to his judgment, by certain rules or laws which are to regulate his judgment, and which have been the rule of life to thoſe who are judged by him; and to pronounce ſentence upon them, either of acquittal or condemnation, according as thoſe laws ſhall direct.

Another part of the Judge's office is to ſee that the ſentence he hath pronounced be carried into effect, either by rewarding thoſe who are acquitted, or puniſhing thoſe who are condemned, according

as the law by which they have been judged shall direct.

This office, it is declared, Jesus shall, at the last day, exercise over all who ever lived: And,

First, over his Church; every member of which shall be judged, and acquitted or condemned by him, according as he shall have improved or neglected the talents committed to him—the precious doctrines of Christianity under which the merciful providence of God placed him.

Secondly, over all the nations of the earth, to whom the knowledge of salvation through Jesus was not made known. The rule of their judgment will be, the laws of that reasonable nature and conscience, and the revelations of his will, which God hath, at any time, given them for the direction of their conduct in life. Matt. xxv. 14, &c.

It is not, however, to be understood, that this right to judge the world which is committed to Jesus, is confined to the single process of the last day. The present government of the world is in his hands; and all the dispensations of Divine Providence, whether of mercy or judgment, are managed by him. "The Father judgeth no man," saith Jesus in the text, "but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The same right he claimeth to himself by various other declarations, though made in different words. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." (Matt. xi. 27.) "All power is given unto me in heaven and in

earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." (John iii. 35.) And, in John xvii. 2, addreſſing himſelf to the Father, he ſaid, "Thou haſt given him (the Son) power over all fleſh."

More citations, from various parts of the New Teſtament, might be added to theſe, to prove that both the preſent government and future judgment of the world are in the hand of Jeſus. I ſhall, however, content myſelf with one from St. Paul: Speaking of the exaltation of his Divine Maſter, he ſaith, God "raiſed" Chriſt "from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church." Eph. i. 20, 21, 22.

Thus is the God-man Jeſus inveſted with that ſupremacy of power which belongs to the eternal Son of God. The conſequence of this inveſtiture is the laſt thing which the text preſents to our view; namely,

Thirdly, the duty which ariſes from this right of judgment committed to the Son—"That all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father"—honour him, clothed with human fleſh, even as the eternal and only begotten Son of God—one with the Father, and equal to him in nature—God bleſſed for ever.

The honour due to the Father being made the

ſtandard or teſt by which to eſtimate and regulate the honour due to the Son, we muſt conſider in what that honour conſiſts, and why it is paid to him by his faithful ſervants, that we may be ever ready to give the ſame honour to the Son.

As the Father is the Creator, Preſerver, and Governor of the univerſe; reverence, adoration, and obedience are due to him from all the creatures of his hand. As he is infinite in power and goodneſs; prayer and ſupplication ought ever to be made to him, that we may obtain the good things neceſſary for us, and be protected from evil. As he is infinite in wiſdom and truth; ſubmiſſion to his will and reliance on his promiſes are due to him. As he is the author and giver of all the abilities we poſſeſs, and of all the good we enjoy; thankſgiving and praiſe from grateful hearts ought ever to aſcend to him.

That God made the worlds by his Son; that the Son upholdeth all things by the word of his power, is declared to us by the pen of an Apoſtle. That all judgment, and the preſent government of the world, is committed to him, we have ſeen from his own declarations. In whatever reſpects, therefore, worſhip, ſubmiſſion, faith, obedience, are due to the Father, they are alſo due to the Son, Jeſus, God and man: becauſe all men are required to honour the Son even as they honour the Father: and he who thus honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father, who ſent him into the world inveſted with power and authority to be Governor and Judge of the whole earth.

If theſe things be ſo, can Jeſus be mere man? Can he be any thing leſs than equal with God? Now, whatſoever is equal with God, is God.

The unity of God, and the duty of worſhipping him only, was the doctrine of the Jewiſh church, eſtabliſhed by divine revelation. "Hear, O Iſrael," ſaid Moſes, "the Lord our God is one Lord. Ye ſhall fear the Lord thy God, and ſhall ſerve him: Ye ſhall not go after other gods." Deut. vi. 4, 13, 14.

The obligation of this command was not only acknowledged by the Jews, but by Jeſus himſelf, when he ſaid to the tempter, "Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve." (Matt. iv. 10.) In ſeveral places of the Scripture, God claims his right to adoration and worſhip, and declares he will not give that right—his glory—to another. (Iſa. xlii. 8.) But in the text equal honour is ordered to be paid to the Son with that which is paid to the Father. The Son, therefore, is not a creature; for divine honour, ſuch as is due to the Father, being paid to any creature, however highly exalted he may be, is idolatry, and to be abhorred by all chriſtian people. The Son, therefore, muſt be God; and, if God, eternal: for every being who had a beginning muſt be a creature; and no creature can be the object of divine adoration.

Hence ariſes the argument, that the Son is not begotten by an act of the Father's will; for then he would have a beginning, and conſequently be a creature. Nor could he be begotten through any external neceſſity; for no ſuch neceſſity can ap-

proach God, who is almighty. The Son must, therefore, be eternally begotten, according to the nature of God—even as the sun in the heavens naturally emits light, and hath done so from the first moment of its existence, and while it exists will ever continue to do so: and was it possible to conceive it to cease to do so, it would, from that moment, cease to be the sun.

The human nature of Jesus, therefore, considered alone, by itself, distinct from and unconnected with his divine nature, is not the object of adoration; but it becomes so in consequence of its being, in an ineffable manner, *taken into God*, and made one with the Son of God *by unity of person*—God and man, divinely united, making one Christ; for "as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ."

Whoever, therefore, believing Jesus to be only man, or only a creature, worships him as God, is guilty of idolatry: for, whatever is not God cannot be the object of Christian worship; and no creature can be God.

If it be said by Arians and Socinians, that they do not worship the Son as the supreme God, but with subordinate worship, as to a being inferior to him: I reply; The Scripture no where directs any subordinate worship to be paid to any being: its language is, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Besides, to give subordinate worship to the Son, is not to honour him as they honour the Father, to whom, as I suppose, they profess to pay supreme adoration.

To believe the Son to be God, and yet to be inferior, as God, to the Father, is nonſenſe. It implies the ridiculous notion of two gods, one ſuperior, the other inferior: and is no better than the old heatheniſh notion of a plurality of gods, in gradation down from Fate ſupreme, to paltry Priapus.

It is here natural to remark, that this God who is worſhipped with ſubordinate worſhip, is either created, or uncreated. If created, whoever worſhips him with divine worſhip, is guilty of idolatry in giving that worſhip to a creature, which is due to the Creator only. If he be uncreated, he muſt be God ſupreme—"equal to the Father as touching his Godhead." And as there can be but one God, he muſt be of the ſame eſſence with the Father, and equal partner in the adorable nature of Jehovah; and equal honour is due to him with the Father. There can be no gradation in the Godhead. Whoever is not the ſupreme God, is no God, and, therefore, no object of divine worſhip.

The Son, then, being God of the ſame nature with the Father, eternally generated by him, and being the Creator, Preſerver, and Governor of the world, hath the right of judgment over all creatures inherent in himſelf. And being united to human nature, by taking the manhood into God; dying in that nature a ſacrifice for the ſin of the world; and riſing again in that nature from death on the third day, and aſcending into heaven, had the right of judgment, which belonged to him the eternal Son of God, committed by the Father to

him, as he was Jesus Christ, the Son of God in human nature, God and man united. The reason assigned why this is done, is, "That all men should honour the Son" of God united to humanity, "even as they honour the Father"—That all men might see and know the high honour and dignity to which the humanity of Jesus, united to the divine nature of the Son of God, is exalted, because it was "obedient to death, even the death of the cross," (Philipp. ii. 8.) for the redemption of the world; and might be thereby led to honour, worship, and obey him, with the same supreme honour, worship, and obedience, which they pay to the Father. For, consider; was it possible to conceive this right of judging the world to have been committed to some other being than the Son of God, who is the Creator, the Upholder, and Redeemer of the world; would it have been no diminution of his dignity? no lessening of his honour and glory? The probable consequence is, that the regard and obedience of men would have been divided between him who is their creator and redeemer, and him who was to be their judge. Whereas, the blessings of creation and redemption flowing from the same person to whom the right of judgment is committed, the reverence and honour, the worship and obedience, the love and gratitude which are due to him, will the more readily be called forth, the more cordially and cheerfully paid.*

* A similar sentiment I have read in one of Bishop Sherlock's sermons; but I know not where to find it. Though, I believe, the worthy Bishop applies it to show the propriety of the Son of God, who is the creator of men, being also their redeemer.

The duty enjoined on us in the Text is, that we ſhould honour the Son even as we honour the Father: and this duty being enforced by the ſtrong tie of creation, and by the more affectionate tie of redemption, as well as by the authority of Jeſus to whom all judgment is committed, let us ſee that we be ever ready to pay it to him, with humble and devout hearts.

The open denial of the divinity of Jeſus Chriſt which now prevails in the world; the debaſement of his character to a level with that of Luther, Mahomet,* &c. the propenſity to conſider all religions as equal in themſelves; and the diſpoſition to return to the heatheniſh worſhip from which our anceſtors were converted to Chriſtianity,† which has ſhown itſelf in various parts of the world,—make it neceſſary that all Chriſt's faithful ſervants, eſpecially the miniſters of his word, ſhould openly

* See the New-York Minerva of September 19 or 20, 1794.

† The prevalence of theatrical entertainments, which, notwithſtanding the fine things that have been ſaid of them, ſtrongly tend to the corruption of principles and manners, to fill the mind with the luſt of ſenſual pleaſure, and to wear all religious impreſſions from it; the erecting of heathen temples and pagodas, as ornaments in their pleaſure-grounds, and ſetting up the ſtatutes of the heathen gods and goddeſſes in conſpicuous points of view; the naming men of war in honour of theſe fictitious deities; dignifying a ſuperb place of entertainment with the name of the Pantheon—the temple *of all the gods;* the total rejection of the religion of Jeſus, and of the name of God in another country; the diſregard of the ſign of the croſs, the emblem of Chriſtianity—I had almoſt ſaid, the contempt with which it is ignorantly treated in our own country—all theſe things, taken together, ſhow that the tranſition from Chriſtianity to heatheniſm would be an event not very difficult to be accompliſhed. And who can ſay that, for theſe things, among others, God is not now calling the nations of the world to judgment, and making them the dreadful ſcourges of each other?

and steadfastly maintain the divine nature of him who hath bought them with his blood, reconciled God to them, established for them the sure hope of eternal life through himself, and taught them how to obtain it.

To this duty let me call you earnestly, my Reverend Brethren; and, I trust in God, you will not fail in it. The distinguished mercy of our august and beloved Master, who hath, by his grace, called us to the honour of serving in his holy church, of making known the glad tidings of salvation through him, and of ministering in holy things to his people, binds strongly on us the obligations of this duty. The force of these obligations is increased by what we owe to his people and to the world. On us, in a good degree, it depends, whether the pure word of God be fully and fairly preached, the sacraments of his church duly administered, and the obligations of holiness explained and enforced.

None of these things can be effectually done, unless the divine nature of Jesus Christ be asserted and inculcated as the ground and sure foundation of all we say or do in his church. All is vain and useless, unless supported by his divinity and merit. "No salvation is there in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12.

Though I am confident, Reverend Brethren, that you are duly sensible of your duty in this respect, and that you will always be ready, with a cheerful mind, to act agreeably to it, let it not be thought superfluous if I again bring to your notice

the latter part of the text: "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which ſent him." He who honoureth not the Son to whom all judgment is committed, honoureth not the Father who hath committed all judgment unto him, and ſent him into the world.

There is, therefore, no way of honouring the Father, but in and by and through the Son, by whom alone he is or can be manifeſted; "who is the brightneſs of his glory, the expreſs image of his perſon," the image of the inviſible God," who is himſelf "God bleſſed forever"—in whom, and by whom, and through whom alone, we can ſee, and know, and have acceſs to the Father.

To the grace and protection of the holy, undivided TRINITY, ONE GOD ALMIGHTY, I commend you, Reverend and Beloved Brethren; beſeeching him to direct your hearts and bleſs your miniſtry; that, holding faſt the faith once delivered to the ſaints, and turning many to righteouſneſs through that wiſdom which is from above, you may riſe from the duſt of the earth to everlaſting life, and ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as the ſtars, for ever and ever, in the heavenly kingdom of your God.

To the ONE GOD JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, Trinity of perſons in one divine eſſence, be honour, glory, and dominion, now and for ever. AMEN.

From what hath been ſaid it appears, that the authority by which the Son of God governeth and judgeth the world, is inherent in him as he is the

Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, and, therefore, of the ſame nature, eſſence, and power with him, being the Creator and Preſerver of the world. And the authority by which Jeſus governeth and judgeth the world, is committed to him, becauſe the godhead and human nature are conjoined in him, " not by confuſion of ſubſtance, but by unity of perſon;" " the manhood being taken into God."

From the dignity of the perſon of the Son of God, we may ſee the neceſſity, as well as the propriety, of his having all judgment inherent in him. His infinite power and knowledge and wiſdom and truth eminently entitle him to it, qualify him for it, and enable him to diſcharge it.

His taking the manhood into God, ſhows the propriety with which all judgment is committed to the God-man, Chriſt Jeſus. Being man as well as God, we are governed and judged by one in our own nature; one who knoweth whereof we are made—our weakneſſes, temptations, difficulties, and diſtreſſes, having himſelf felt them, and will, therefore, graciouſly make all proper allowance for them.

Having, I truſt, ſhown the divinity of the Son of God united to human nature in Jeſus Chriſt, and the propriety of his having all judgment committed to him, that he might be the object of our full faith and beſt obedience, I beg leave to mention another conſideration ariſing from the text, and highly worthy of our regard.

Not many years back, a ſcheme of religion was preached in this country, and hath ſince conſidera-

bly ſpread, aſſerting the final ſalvation of all men through Jeſus Chriſt. Had this final ſalvation been predicted on the repentance of all men, I know not that it would have been neceſſary to have ſaid any thing againſt it. But, on the contrary, all faith, repentance, obedience, and every requiſite and mean of ſalvation, as they have been commonly underſtood and taught in the Church of Chriſt, are excluded: all terms and conditions of ſalvation are denied. Chriſt, they ſay, gave no laws, and requires nothing to be done. Nor do the aſſertors of this doctrine appear to make holineſs, or a good life, of any conſequence beyond this world. The troubles, diſtreſſes, and ſorrows of this life, and the doubts and uncertainties which will perplex the wicked in the intermediate ſtate between death and the reſurrection, they conſider as the only ſuffering for ſin. But, at the reſurrection, every one will come forth to happineſs and glory in the heavenly kingdom of God.

Whether theſe be the doctrines of every one of thoſe who call themſelves Univerſaliſts, or whether every one hath a diſtinct creed, I know not. But theſe are points I have collected from converſation with a ſenſible man, of good character, who ſeems to be a leader among them.

Antinomianiſm appears to be the ground of this ſcheme; new-modelled, indeed, by extending the benefits of Chriſt's death to the whole world, which the old Antinomians confined only to the elect.

But, that they ſtand on the ſame ground appears from their repreſenting the ſins of men merely as a debt due to almighty God. This debt, they ſay, Chriſt hath fully paid as their ſubſtitute: that, therefore, it would be inconſiſtent with the juſtice of God to demand again the payment of his debt, which had already been paid by his ſubſtitute. Beſides;

They both aſcribe ſalvation—the Antinomian, of the elect; the Univerſaliſt, of all men—to the abſolute, unconditional decree of God, without any regard to the goodneſs or holineſs of men.

My ſubject does not require me to enter into this controverſy. Yet, after obſerving that religious errors have commonly ſome truth mixed with them, I ſhall remark, that the above poſition does not ſeem to accord well with the Text.

That Chriſt made a full, perfect, and ſufficient ſacrifice, oblation, and ſatisfaction for the ſins of the whole world, will not be diſputed by any member of Chriſt's Church who underſtands his religion. But it appears from the Text, that the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. The office of a Judge is to examine the actions of men, to paſs ſentence on them according to their actions, compared with the rule of life which God gave them.

Chriſt hath declared, that he will execute this judgment; and that "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth, they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have

done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation." According to this declaration of the holy Jeſus, his final judgment ſhall follow the general reſurrection at the laſt day; and ſhall diſcriminate between thoſe who have done good, and thoſe who have done evil: and the ſentence which he ſhall pronounce, he will fulfil on them—bleſſedneſs to the good, condemnation to the evil.

To appeal to the juſtice of God in this matter, and ſay that he will not require a ſecond payment of the debt of ſin, which Chriſt, our ſubſtitute, hath already ſatisfied, is talking ignorantly. The juſtice of God is not concerned in the matter. The Son of God is the Creator of men; he is alſo their Redeemer; having bought them with his blood, they are his: he is now their Governor and their Judge, and will finally paſs an irrevocable ſentence on them, according as the laws of his Goſpel, and of that reaſonable nature he hath given them, ſhall direct. His ſentence will be juſt, and will be executed. Nor is there any diverſity of will in the Father and Son: they are not *two*, but one God. And, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Beſides;

The Father hath given to the Son, "power over all fleſh." (John xvii. 2.) This power neceſſarily implies the power of judgment—of puniſhing and rewarding, as his juſtice ſhall direct. Suppoſe, for a moment, that, at the laſt day, Chriſt hath no power to condemn the wicked, but only power to give them eternal life, and then tell me

how he hath power over all flesh? Tell me, too, what becomes of his office of administering all judgment, which the Father hath committed to him?

I am not ignorant that the Universalists have proposed a new translation of the latter part of John xvii. 2. ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ, δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, which they render, *that every thing which thou hast given to him, he may give to them, even eternal life.* But this translation cannot be just, because it advances a position which is not true, viz. that Christ will give to all men *every thing* which God hath given to him, *even eternal life.* This makes eternal life equivalent to *every thing* which the Father hath given to the Son, which is not true. The Father hath made the Son *head of the Church*; hath committed *all judgment* unto him; hath given him *power over all flesh—all power in heaven and earth*; hath put *all things under his feet.* This super-eminency of power and dignity is no part of that eternal life reserved for the faithful servants of God. It is not, therefore, true that Christ is to give them every thing which the Father hath given to him.

With regard to the translation in our Bible, "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," I have consulted Hammond and Whitby, both good Greek critics, and both disposed to amend errors in our translation: and they neither of them take notice of any thing amiss in the rendering of this verse.

Pool, in his Synop. Critic. gives the very translation of the Universalists; *ut omne quod dedisti ei,*

det eis, et tandem vitam eternam. He obſerves that παν ὁ is a Hebraiſm for πᾶσι ὁ, or πασὶν, and makes the true rendering of it to be, *ut omnibus quos dediſti ei, det eis vitam eternam—that to all whom thou haſt given to him, he may give eternal life.* Thoſe who are given to Chriſt, he makes to be thoſe whom God hath ſubjected to him as their Redeemer and Mediator. Theſe, according to Dr. Hammond, are they who are called to the profeſſion of Chriſt's religion, and obey him. John vi. 39.

Pool adduces the paſſage from John vi. 39. ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκέ μοι ὁ πατήρ, μὴ ἀπολέσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ; where Jeſus cannot ſpeak of things, but of perſons, as appears by the context, particularly by his ſubjoining, ἀλλὰ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸ ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ; where, though the whole verſe be expreſſed in the neuter gender and ſingular number, it is evident the meaning is plural, and relates to perſons, not to things. "And," or "but, this is the will of the Father who ſendeth me, that of all thoſe he hath given to me, I ſhould loſe none, but ſhould raiſe them up at the laſt day."

The new verſion which the Univerſaliſts have given of John xvii. 2. is therefore inadmiſſible. It advances a poſition not true in itſelf, and it is unſupported by good criticiſm, founded on accurate knowledge of the Greek language, and of the Hebraiſms uſed by St. John.

In the cloſe of the proceſs of the general judgment at the laſt day, which Jeſus himſelf hath given us in Matt. xxv. it evidently appears, that

all mankind ſhall be judged by him, receive their ſentence from him, and have that ſentence fulfilled by his authority—" Theſe," ſaid he, the wicked repreſented by the goats on his left hand, " ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment; but the righteous into life eternal."

The Univerſaliſts evade the argument ariſing from this deſcription of the general judgment, by ſaying that the *goats* do not denote *men*, but *devils*; that is, wicked angels. By the ſame conſtruction, the righteous ought not to mean *men*, but *good angels*; for they both relate to the ſame order of beings, and are diſtinguiſhed, not by their nature, but by their properties or qualifications. For their works of benevolence and mercy, the *ſheep*, the *righteous* are acquitted by their Judge, and rewarded with life eternal. And becauſe they had neglected the works of benevolence and mercy, the *goats*, the *wicked* are conſigned to everlaſting puniſhment.

That the devils ſhall be judged and condemned at the general judgment, appears from the Scriptures. But it appears not that they are repreſented by goats; nor is the proceſs of their judgment made known to us. Beſides; to ſay to wicked men, who have taken part with devils in their iniquity, " Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," is a natural mode of ſpeech. Hell is, or rather will be prepared for the devils; it was not originally intended for men, and will finally be the portion only of thoſe among them who take part with the devil, do his work, and form themſelves into his temper. But

to ſay to *devils*, 'Depart into everlaſting fire prepared for the devils and his angels,' is a form of expreſſion that will not be uſed by a good grammarian, as it muſt ſound harſh and uncouth to every ear.

The goats were ſentenced to everlaſting puniſhment, becauſe they had not fed the hungry, nor clothed the naked, nor viſited the ſick, nor adminiſtered to the various neceſſities of human nature. Theſe duties are not, that I know of, required of devils, but of men: men, therefore, not devils, will be condemned for their deficiency in them.

What I have delivered is plainly the doctrine of Chriſtianity. In ſupport of it, I have cited nothing but the words of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God: and to his authority, I aſſure myſelf, you will always pay a ready obedience. In conformity to their divine Maſter, his holy Apoſtles have ever delivered the ſame doctrine on this ſubject; viz. That Chriſt ſhall judge the world at the laſt day: that the open actions, and ſecret thoughts and deſigns of men, ſhall come before him: that his ſentence ſhall be final, and ſhall be fully carried into effect: that he will render glory and immortality to thoſe who have done good, and inflict indignation and wrath upon thoſe who have done evil; according to the laws of his Goſpel.

It is true, that as the Father is the fountain of the divinity from which the Son is eternally generated; and as the Son hath the ſame nature and will with the Father, and doth nothing but what he ſeeth the Father do, that is, in exact conformity

with him; so every thing the Son doth, and all the honour he receiveth, ultimately centers in the Father, according to the subordination (of order only, not of nature) in the holy Trinity. In the œconomy, however, of the creation, redemption, and salvation of men, every Person in the Trinity is represented as having his distinct office: The Father is the Creator, the Son the Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier of men; yet all the blessed Persons of the triune God acting, in all things, in unity of nature and will.

The full and perfect sacrifice and satisfaction which Christ made for the sins of the world has been mentioned. But to whom the benefits of that satisfaction belong, whether to those who live and die in their wickedness, or to those only who repent and forsake their sins, and live and die in obedience to God, is a distinct consideration; but a consideration which nearly affects every one. God is reconciled to man by the death of his Son. But is it not necessary that man be reconciled to God by holiness of life? If not, how is the reconciliation between God and man complete? or how is Christ an effectual Mediator? In 2 Cor. v. 18, &c. this two-fold reconciliation, of God to man by the death of his Son, and of man to God by holiness or "righteousness," is clearly set forth, and ought to be attentively regarded by those who look to him for salvation without repentance and a good life; that is, such a life as the Gospel requires.

The sanctification of the heart by the Spirit of God is necessary to salvation through Christ, be-

cauſe "without holineſs no man ſhall ſee"—be happy with—"the Lord;" and becauſe when we have our "fruit unto holineſs," "the end" will be "eternal life." Rom. vi. 22.

To ſuppoſe that the man who dies unholy ſhall, by the power of God, be made holy in the next world, hath no promiſe of God to ſtand on. It is, therefore, not faith, but opinion. Faith is built on the promiſes and declarations of God; opinions ſtand on the concluſions of a man's own mind: and however they may be excuſable in the Philoſopher; in the Chriſtian, eſpecially in the Chriſtian Miniſter, who "walks by faith, not by ſight," or opinion, they can never be juſtified. His buſineſs is to preach repentance and faith to the ſinner in this world—converſion of the heart from ſin to holineſs, that his ſins may be forgiven, and his ſoul ſaved in the day of the Lord. Further his commiſſion reaches not: Nor can he give any aſſurance of the remiſſion of ſins on any other ground, except his own opinion. And the man who takes up with opinion inſtead of faith; that is, builds his hope of ſalvation on his own notions, inſtead of the promiſes and declarations of God, is in no good way to eternal life.

DISCOURSE VI.

PART THE FIRST.

HEAVEN THE CITY OF CHRISTIANS.

PHILIPP. iii. 20, 21. *For our converſation is in heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.*

IN ſome of the verſes which precede the text, the Apoſtle had directed the Philippians to be followers of him as their pattern in Chriſtian converſation, and to mark them as examples of holy living, who copied after him in the conduct of their lives. He hath thereby not only intimated, but eſtabliſhed it to be the duty of all Chriſtian miniſters, to adorn their ſtation in Chriſt's Church with a holy and unblamable life; exhibiting all the graces and virtues of that heavenly converſation

which their religion requires. Hence the duty of thoſe who live under their miniſtry, to follow and imitate their example, will be evident.

The propriety of this conduct, both in Chriſtian miniſters and people, appears from what the Apoſtle hath ſaid in the two verſes immediately before the Text—"Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now again tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the croſs of Chriſt: whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe God is their belly; and whoſe glory is in their ſhame, who mind earthly things."

This declaration of the Apoſtle ought to convince us, that thoſe profeſſors of Chriſtianity who, inſtead of exhibiting the open practice of the graces and virtues of their holy religion in their lives, indulge themſelves in vice and immorality, are enemies to the religion they profeſs. As much as in them lieth, they deſtroy the efficacy of the redemption of Chriſt: With regard to themſelves, they entirely defeat it. The deſign of Chriſt's redemption is eternal ſalvation; but their end will be deſtruction.

That we might be at no loſs with reſpect to that conduct which makes a man the enemy of the croſs of Chriſt, and endeth in deſtruction, the Apoſtle hath told us, it is the conduct of thoſe "whoſe God is their belly"—of thoſe, namely, who indulge themſelves in the exceſſes of ſenſual living; who exert themſelves to enjoy the pleaſures of the palate; who place their happineſs in eating and drinking, not to ſatisfy their natural hunger, but to gra-

tify the cravings of appetite, made capricious and humorſome by indulgence.

If we reflect that our religion requires abſtinence from ſenſual pleaſure, the denial and mortification of the appetites of the body to that degree, that the fleſh being ſubdued to the Spirit, we may obey all godly motions "in righteouſneſs and true holineſs;" we ſhall not be ſurprized at the heavy cenſure the Apoſtle hath caſt on thoſe who make the indulgence of the ſtomach the principal end of their living. "His ſervants ye are to whom ye obey." He who obeys the cravings of his ſtomach, and is perpetually contriving ways and means to gratify its deſires, is properly its ſervant—all his care is, how to ſerve it; and his greateſt happineſs ariſes from its gratification. In truth, it is his *God*, for it has his affections and ſervices, and is the ſource of his higheſt enjoyment.

Another reaſon which ſhows the baneful effects of habitually gratifying the cravings of the ſtomach is, that over-feeding, eſpecially with rich and delicate food, increaſes and inflames all the other appetites of the body, and, in proportion, the paſſions of the mind. They become more unruly, more difficult to be controlled, and lead directly to the perpetration of thoſe crimes which the Apoſtle cenſures, when he ſays of thoſe who live in them, "whoſe glory is in their ſhame"—Shame, indeed, to follow the bent of inordinate affections into the practice of wantonneſs and lewdneſs: Still greater ſhame, to boaſt and glory in them, as if they were the higheſt honour and perfection of human nature.

No better conduct, however, is to be expected of thoſe enemies of the croſs of Chriſt, whoſe evil character the Apoſtle hath ſummed up, when he ſaid that they "mind earthly things"—mind them ſo as to mind little elſe. The enjoyments and delights of the preſent ſcene of their being, engage entirely their attention; in them they place their happineſs; on them they employ their pains; regardleſs of all the hopes and promiſes of another life; as if, like the brute animals, their nature were capable of no enjoyment but what ſprings from this world, and is to be obtained in this life.

With far different ſentiments does our holy religion inſpire all its true votaries. View the pattern which the holy Apoſtle ſet to the Philippians and to all Chriſtians; to the imitation of which he ardently preſſed them, when he ſaid, "Brethren, be followers together of me; and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have us for an enſample." The example he ſet in this matter is deſcribed in his Epiſtle to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. ix. 27.) Inſtead of feeding his body beyond what the neceſſity of nature required, he *kept it under, and brought it into ſubjection*, leſt if he neglected to practice that abſtinence and mortification which he preached to others, he ſhould become a *caſtaway*—a reprobate rejected of God.

In the text he alſo propoſeth his own example as a pattern to others, and deſcribeth it as ſpringing from very different principles, when compared to thoſe which govern the conduct of men of the world. "Our converſation," ſaith he, "is in hea-

ven." We pamper not the body, that we may enjoy its luſts: we make not our belly our God; nor glory in our ſhame; nor mind earthly things. So far from it, we are ſcarcely men of this world, and live not according to the faſhion of worldly maxims.

The Greek word πολίτευμα, tranſlated *converſation*, ſignifies the government of a city or country, the adminiſtration of that government, a number of people living under the ſame laws, the rights and privileges of a citizen.

The meaning of the expreſſion, "Our converſation is in heaven," is, therefore, that the government of the community to which Chriſtians belong, and the adminiſtration of that government, are in heaven, not on earth—that they are members of a ſociety which, though part of it be in the world, is not of the world, but is taken out of it, and, by adoption, made free of the new Jeruſalem, the city of the great King, Jeſus the Saviour, the head of the Church which is his kingdom.

Of this kingdom Jeſus ſpake when, before "Pontius Pilate, he witneſſed a good profeſſion," and ſaid, "My kingdom is not of this world." Its polity, therefore, and the adminiſtration of it, are from heaven, the reſidence of its King. For when he had finiſhed his miniſtry here on earth, having made expiation for the ſin of the world by his death; having laid the foundation of his Church in this world, and committed the adminiſtration of it to his Apoſtles, under the direction of the Holy Ghoſt; having triumphed over the devil, ſin, and

death, by his resurrection from the grave; he ascended up on high to take possession of his kingdom which he had purchased, or earned by his humiliation and sufferings, and is now "seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. xii. 2.

From this state of exaltation he gave gifts unto men, (Ps. lxviii. 18. Eph. iv. 8.) particularly the gift of the Holy Ghost, the blessed Spirit of God, whom, according to his own most true promise, he sent from the Father upon his Apostles and Church, to be with them to the end of the world, "that the Lord God might dwell among them." Under the direction of this Spirit is the government, the ministry, the faith, doctrines, discipline, and whatever relates to the Church, placed. All the offices in the Church are his various ministrations for the edification, the building up, the improvement, the perfecting of the Church in faith and holiness. And through the Church, every member of it receives the heavenly influences, and holy inspirations of this divine and life-giving Spirit.

Men, therefore, are not born members of this Church by their natural birth; but according to the appointment of him who is its King and Governor, its Redeemer and Saviour, they who by faith embrace his mediation, are taken out of this world, because of its enmity against God, translated into his Church, and made denizens of it by the regeneration of baptism and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

All our sentiments and expressions of spiritual and eternal things, being taken from things natu-

ral and temporal; it is highly probable that St. Paul was led into this manner of repreſenting the condition of Chriſtians, by the practice of the Roman government under which he lived. With them it was common, in reward of ſervices performed, or as an encouragement to the performance of them, or from meer good-will, to admit, not only particular perſons to the freedom and franchiſes of Rome, but whole cities in many parts of their empire. All who were afterward born free of ſuch cities, were born free alſo of the city of Rome.

This was the caſe of St. Paul. He was born at Tarſus, a city of Cilicia, a free colony; that is, its inhabitants enjoyed the immunities and rights of citizens at Rome; and this freedom he pleaded on more than one occaſion, to ſkreen himſelf from ſuch puniſhment as could not be inflicted legally on Roman freemen.

Philippi, to the Chriſtian inhabitants of which St. Paul wrote this Epiſtle, had been admitted to the ſame privileges. They would readily underſtand the meaning of his expreſſion, "Our citizenſhip is in heaven," to be, that as they were citizens of heaven, they ought to attend to the intereſt, and honour, and manners of that city to which they belonged; not to mind earthly things, becauſe they related merely to this world, out of which they had been taken by the mercy of God, and tranſlated into the kingdom of his dear Son; made freemen of Jeruſalem, which is above, the city of the living God. And that as they had been

endowed with this exalted privilege, they, at the ſame time, became ſubject to the government, obliged to obey the laws, fulfil the duties, comply with the manners and cuſtoms of that ſociety, and in this world have their converſation in heaven. For this was the caſe with all thoſe foreigners who were admitted to the freedom of Rome. They became poſſeſſed of advantages very conſiderable, and of high eſtimation in the world. But they became ſubject to the laws of Rome, and it was expected they would fulfil all the duties thoſe laws required.

The application of this caſe to Chriſtians in general is very obvious. By the goodneſs of God they are taken out of this wicked world, and made free citizens of the new Jeruſalem, the city of the living God, which hath foundations ſtable and eternal, and ſubject to none of the viciſſitudes of mortal things. In virtue of their adoption into this city, they claim many rights and privileges of high value, but which they could claim on no other account: Such are the forgiveneſs of ſins and a bleſſed immortality after the reſurrection.

When they became freemen of this city, and entitled to its privileges and bleſſings, they became alſo ſubject to its laws and government, and obliged to live according to its cuſtoms and manners. They muſt renounce its enemies; they muſt maintain its honour; they muſt conſult its peace; they muſt ſeek its proſperity. At preſent they live in a foreign country, remote from their city, and from the full enjoyment of the great bleſſings which they

hope aſſuredly they ſhall one day receive in it. Their eyes and heart, and every faculty of their ſoul ought to be fixed where their complete happineſs is expected. The friendſhip of the world, they know, is enmity with God, the Sovereign of that holy city of which they are members. They muſt not, therefore, hold alliance with it; nor live by its maxims; nor adopt its principles; nor covet its riches; nor ſeek its pleaſures; but renouncing its pomps and vanities, its deluſive hopes and vain enjoyments, and keeping ſteadfaſt to the laws and manners of that city whoſe builder and maker is God, wait, in faith and patience, for the completion of all their hopes.

The laws of that city are in full force upon them in their pilgrimage in this world, and by them they are required to regulate their conduct. It is their misfortune that, incumbered as they are in this mortal life, with the body of ſin and death, and expoſed to the aſſaults of the prince of darkneſs, they cannot always live free from ſin, and in the ſame purity with the ſouls of their fellow-citizens, who have been called already by their King and God, to the participation of peace and refreſhment in the heavenly paradiſe. To aſpire after as great a degree of their purity as human frailty will permit, is however their duty. By this reſemblance they will become companions meet for them, when it ſhall pleaſe God to call them alſo out of the miſeries of this ſinful world, to join their heavenly ſociety.

This happineſs we, as Chriſtians, hope to enjoy.

We ſhould, therefore, endeavour to fit ourſelves for it by doing faithfully all thoſe things which God requires of us. The proſpect of the bliſs we hope to enjoy in the kingdom of God, ought to fill our hearts with love and gratitude to him, and raiſe them above all anxious deſires after the fleeting happineſs of this vain world.

This conduct, on our part, would ward off, or greatly lighten the troubles of life. It would moderate the violence of paſſion and appetite, which, through their impetuoſity, give us ſo much uneaſineſs, and involve us in ſo many ſins. It would reconcile us to the thoughts of our own diſſolution, which muſt ere long take place; but whether it will open to us ſcenes of happineſs or miſery, depends on our preſent conduct. If we preſerve our right to our heavenly inheritance, by preſerving that holy converſation which God requires, happy ſhall we be in death. It will open to us the gate of paradiſe, and lead us to a bleſſed immortality, when the morning of the reſurrection ſhall wake us from the ſleep of the grave.

But if we forget or neglect the holy city of our God, and, turning from the glories it holds out to us, become like thoſe of whom the Apoſtle ſpeaks, when he ſays, "Whoſe God is their belly, whoſe glory is in their ſhame, who mind earthly things;" we ſhall forfeit our inheritance, and, like them, "ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them

that believe, in that day." (2 Theſ. i. 9, 10.) For, from heaven "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

In great humility he once came into the world to redeem us from the deadly curſe of ſin, to open to us the gate of everlaſting life, and make us citizens of Jeruſalem which is above, which is free, and the mother of us all. At the end of the world, we believe he will come again in his glorious majeſty to judge the quick and the dead, and to recompenſe every one with happineſs or miſery eternal, according as his life hath been.

At that time, may we be found of him in peace, without ſpot and blameleſs, and received to the full enjoyment of the happineſs of that city, whoſe builder and maker is God. So be it, bleſſed God, for Jeſus ſake, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

DISCOURSE VI.

PART THE SECOND.

JESUS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

IN the former part of this Diſcourſe, I have explained the firſt part of the Text, in which St. Paul recommendeth his own example to the Philippians, for their imitation in the chriſtian life. My preſent buſineſs is with the ſecond part of it, which hath been juſt introduced to your notice by obſerving, that the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, once came in great humility to redeem us from the curſe of ſin, and to open to us the gate of everlaſting life, by making us free citizens of the heavenly Jeruſalem.

The proper inference to be drawn from this obſervation is, that our converſation ought to correſpond with theſe exalted privileges: becauſe we believe this ſame Lord Jeſus Chriſt will come again at the end of the world; not in humility as a Redeemer, but in glory and majeſty, as the Judge

of the living and dead; and that he will then recompense every man according to his deeds.

This is the Christian's faith. Into it he was baptized, when he was admitted as a citizen of heaven. Judge for yourselves, what his life and conversation ought to be: whether he ought not to remember his heavenly inheritance, and live as the laws of that holy place require; or whether it would be decent for him to neglect it, and become the enemy of the cross of Christ, by which he is redeemed from death, and hath those rich blessings made over to him.

Judge also what the magnificent scene of that tremendous majesty must be, when the Son of God shall descend in the glory of the Father, with all his holy Angels, to reckon with the inhabitants of the earth: with you, and me, and with every one who hath ever lived. Are you prepared to enter the trial? If not, beg of God the grace of repentance, that, through the blood of Jesus, your sins may be passed over, by the mercy of God.

To the good and to the evil the issue of this judgment will be very different. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people who forget God:" while the righteous shall shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father for ever.

"From heaven," saith the Apostle, "we," Christians, "look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

Behold the high reward proposed to the faithful Christian; and let it excite his wishes, and stimu-

late his endeavours to obtain it. Vile and worthleſs is the human body, ſince through the defilement of ſin it was loaded with infirmity: through its own frailneſs it drops into the grave and diſſolves in corruption.

However vile and worthleſs by nature the body of the good Chriſtian may be, it is coheir with the ſoul of all the privileges of that heavenly city, whoſe builder and maker is God. It is part of that humanity which the Son of God took on himſelf, when he came to bear the ſin of the world; and, through faith in his blood, it is an heir of all the bleſſings he purchaſed by his death—a coheir with him of the kingdom of heaven. Hear what he himſelf hath ſaid: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice"—the voice of the Son of God—"and ſhall come forth, they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation." John v. 28, 29.

"They that have done good" ſhall come forth "unto the reſurrection of life." In conformity to this declaration of his divine Maſter, St. Paul, ſpeaking of thoſe who ſhall be found alive at the coming of Chriſt to judgment, hath ſaid, "We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump; for the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed." 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

There ſhall, therefore, be a reſurrection of the

dead, both of the good and of the evil. And when this event shall take place, they who shall be alive shall be changed from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to an endless existence. After this scene, the general judgment shall follow. The good shall be separated from the evil. They who through faith, and penitence, and good works, have preserved their right to the heavenly inheritance—have ordered their conversation according to the laws and manners of that city which is above, of which they were admitted to be free members by holy baptism, shall be accepted by their Judge, and advanced to the full enjoyment of those rights and blessings which they can now embrace only by faith and hope. Through the merit of their Redeemer, they shall triumphantly enter in his train into the holy city, the Church of the first-born in heaven, and live with him in glory and happiness for ever.

They, on the contrary, who have done evil—have renounced their faith, have lost their patience, have lived impenitently, have neglected the good works of their holy religion, and have thereby forfeited their right to the heavenly inheritance, have taken part with the enemies of the cross of Christ, have lived in the lust and evil affections of their present nature, have minded only earthly things, and have thereby forfeited their right to the heavenly inheritance, shall then find their end to be destruction: they shall be driven from the presence of the Lord, to live with apostate spirits, whose part they have chosen, and whom they have served.

What change will be made in the bodies of the wicked after the reſurrection, further than that they will be rendered immortal, doth not appear. But the bodies of thoſe Chriſtians who have walked worthy of their vocation, ſhall be changed, and faſhioned like unto the glorious body of Chriſt; becauſe they are members of his body, and animated by his Spirit; fellow-heirs with him of the heavenly inheritance, and partakers of the glory which ſhall be revealed in that day.

" Fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." In its preſent ſtate of humiliation and diſhonour, of frailty and neceſſity, of ſin and impurity, of affliction and ſorrow, of pain and ſickneſs, of decay and death, the human body is incapable of celeſtial happineſs. The Spirit of God, with which the Chriſtian is endued, can animate it by faith, and purify it by holineſs. Then, in the day of the reſurrection, when the almighty power of the Son of God ſhall bring the dead from their graves, its vileneſs ſhall give place to immortality and glory, in all thoſe " who love his appearing." Though born into this world " in corruption, it ſhall be raiſed in incorruption:" though born " in diſhonour, it ſhall be raiſed in glory:" though born " in weakneſs, it ſhall be raiſed in power:" though born " an animal body, it ſhall be raiſed a ſpiritual body," and be exactly fitted to enjoy the full happineſs prepared for it in the city of God.

The greatneſs of this change will not exceed the belief of the pious Chriſtian. He knows the

power of the person who is to effect it. "From heaven he looks for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body—according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself." "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (John v. 21, 26.) And "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Verse 28, 29.

He who hath life in himself, and power to give life to the dead, must be the author and fountain of life—God himself. He, therefore, cannot want power to change our body from its present vile state, and make it what his wisdom sees best—"like unto his own most glorious body." Through the energy of his power "he is able even to subdue all things to himself."

The hope of the Christian, therefore, cannot fail him. It rests on the power of the Son of God. We know he hath power to raise the dead; to change the vile and corruptible bodies of his faithful servants, and fashion them like unto his own most glorious body, making them thereby capable of living with him in that glory to which his human nature is exalted in the holy city of God most high. He hath promised that he will do so. His word is truth, and shall assuredly be accomplished.

Several inferences, which will be of service to us

in the Chriſtian life, may be drawn from what hath been ſaid on this ſubject.

1. It ſhows, in a ſtrong light, the neceſſity of that holy converſation which the Goſpel requires. It is the body which, by its luſts and appetites, excites men to mind earthly things, and gives them all the excuſe they have for making proviſion for the fleſh. But this body, vile in its preſent ſtate, the ſlave of appetite and paſſion, is, with the ſoul, the adopted citizen of heaven: It ſhall be raiſed from death: It ſhall be changed from vileneſs to glory: It ſhall be made capable of happineſs eternal. We ought, therefore, to turn ourſelves from earthly to heavenly things; and live in this world according to the manners of that city where glory and happineſs are provided for us.

2. The view of the ſubject that hath been before us, ſhows the folly and abſurdity of gratifying the appetites of the body, beyond what nature and neceſſity require. They are not to be with us forever; nor are they to make any part of our future happineſs. Immoderately purſued, they deſtroy our capacity of enjoyment even in this life; and, at laſt, they deſtroy life itſelf. Beſides, the indulgence of them increaſes the corruption of our nature, and adds to the dregs and droſs of our vile body, all which muſt be refined and purified, or taken away, before it can be capable of eternal happineſs.

He, on the contrary, who conſiders the luſts and groſs appetites of the body as marks of its preſent vileneſs; who knows that they muſt be totally

abolished before he can be happy with God; and, under that impression, does his utmost to resist and suppress them; will thereby take off a great part of his present humiliation and vileness.

3. The due consideration of this subject will, by God's grace, help us to bear, with patience and resignation to his will, the wants and distresses of life which arise from the body. Sickness, and decay, and accidents, are the unavoidable attendants of our mortal state. The highest virtue, the most heavenly disposition, secures us not against them: But the faithful Christian knows, and it is his joy to know, that they can endure but for a short time: When God shall call him to rest in the grave, he shall be freed from all the miseries of this world—he shall rest in Jesus till the voice of the Arch-angel shall summon his body from death, to take possession of the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world.

He will, therefore, bear with patience all the evils of life which God sees best for him to endure. A stranger and pilgrim on earth, he will look to heaven as his home, and be content that every thing in this world should be to him as God pleases.

He, on the contrary, who looks to the world for happiness, and expects his highest enjoyments from the gratification of his animal nature, arms all the accidents, and sicknesses, and pains of life, with double force against himself. If he succeed in his views, he hath only the happiness of a brute animal to compensate his pains. If any thing prevent the pleasures he seeks, he must be wretched,

for he hath no other expectation left. So foolish is the man who depends on bodily pleasures, and neglects the happiness of the kingdom of God.

4. The change of his mortal body to immortality, for which the pious Christian hopes, and which he knows assuredly he shall attain at the resurrection of the just, by the energy of the power of Christ, will effectually arm him against the terror of death, and comfort him under the loss of his pious friends and connections. To these afflictions we are ever exposed, and often feel their full bitterness. Be it our consolation, that they who die in the Lord are blessed, because they rest from their labours; because, being delivered from the burden of the flesh, and all the miseries of this sinful world, they are in joy and felicity in paradise, waiting for their perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in the everlasting glory of the heavenly kingdom of God.

5. The piety of treating the dead bodies of Christians, and even the ground in which they are laid, with reverence and respect, appears evident from this view of the subject. Remarkably did this piety appear in the first Christians. Devout men carried holy Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation for him. Strong was the faith, lively the hope of the first Disciples of Jesus. They laid their dead in the earth, and as much as possible guarded them from violence: Knowing that the grave swallowed them not up for ever, but received them as a trust which it would be obliged punctually to restore, when God should demand it.

In this respect the Church hath happily imitated the example of the first Christians. The dead bodies of her members are committed to the ground with decent and affecting solemnity. She professeth her faith in the Saviour, the "Lord Jesus Christ; who is the resurrection and the life; who shall change our vile body of earth, ashes, and dust, that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself." In the fulness of her faith, she gives thanks to God that he hath been pleased to deliver the faithful departed "out of the miseries of this sinful world," and prays for the full accomplishment of the kingdom of glory in the world to come—that we who yet survive may, with all those who are departed in the "true faith of God's holy name, have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

As a mean to accomplish this end, she further prays our merciful God, the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Christ; and at the general resurrection in the last day, be found acceptable in the sight of God, and receive that blessing which his well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear him, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Be it, then, our steadfast care to live as we pray; to restrain all sinful desires and actions; to set our

affections on things above; to have regard to the manners of that holy ſociety to which we belong—the city of the new Jeruſalem—the Church of the living God enrolled in heaven. By God's goodneſs we are now members of his militant, ſuffering Church here on earth. Our faith and hope is, that if we live as that Church directs, and paſs the time of our ſojourning here in the fear of God, we ſhall, when the reſurrection is paſt, be made partakers of the glory and bleſſedneſs of his Church triumphant in heaven, through the power and merit of him who is the reſurrection and the life, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

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